

**SATELLITE CHANNELS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE BBC  
PERSIAN TELEVISION'S CONSTRUCTION OF IRAN'S GREEN  
MOVEMENT**

**MANSOUREH GANJIAN**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY**

**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

**2017**

**UNIVERSITY MALAYA**  
**ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION**

Name of Candidate: Mansoureh Ganjian      I/C/Passport No: J25166547

Registration/ Matric No: AHA 120015

Name of Degree: Ph.D.

Title of Project paper/ Research Report/ Dissertation/ Thesis ("this Work"):

**SATELLITE CHANNELS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE BBC PERSIAN  
TELEVISION'S CONSTRUCTION OF IRAN'S GREEN MOVEMENT**

Field of Study: Media Policy

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) I am the sole author/ writer of this work;
- (2) This work is original;
- (3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any except or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this work;
- (4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor ought I reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
- (5) I hereby assign all every rights in the copyright to this work to the University of Malaya ("Um"), who henceforth shall be the owner of the copyright in this work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;
- (6) I am fully aware that is in the course of making this work I have fringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise. I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate's Signature:

Date:

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness's signature

Date:

Name:

## **ABSTRACT**

In modern societies, the term of “social movements” is representative of broad social alliance of people who are connected through their collectively shared knowledge and identity to give voice to their concerns by engaging in collective actions. Evidently, media, as an integral part, has been associated with new social movements in departure of collective identity to collective behaviors. Since the social media, due to velocity and amplification in exchange of information, has been received more attention by scholars, the purpose of this study is to prominent the role of transnational TVs, as multi-platform services, in non-democratic countries when political control of internet cause a fundamental shift in form of expressing the protests and grievance by the new media. On that account, this study is an attempt to evaluate the news coverage of the BBC Persian TV (BBCPTV) in 2009 presidential post-election and the Iranian Green Movement, whereas the issue is clouded by the BBCPTV’ claim for unbiased reporting. Increasing the value of citizen journalism and user-generated content (UGC) during the Iran’s political crisis indicates the important role of the BBCPTV as a reliable source of information. It capable the protestors have their voice heard through the world largest broadcaster, when they have limited access to internal media and social networks as well. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA) by applying to Fairclough approach (1989), this article develops a theoretical framework of constructivist approach to explicate whether the BBCPTV discourse, for the period of 2009-2011, has been in line with the Green leaders’ demands and goals. The findings provide confirmatory evidence that the BBCPTV through specific framing, has attempted to validate the movement’s goals and its legitimacy while delegitimize Islamic Republic of Iran.

## **ABSTRAK**

Dalam masyarakat moden, istilah "pergerakan sosial" adalah wakil perikatan sosial yang luas melalui ahli masyarakat yang mempunyai hubungan melalui pengetahuan yang dikongsi secara kolektif dan identiti yang akan memberi suara kepada kebimbangan mereka dengan melibatkan diri dalam tindakan kolektif mereka. Ternyata, kebanyakan media konteks dikaitkan dengan pergerakan sosial yang baru di mana ia berada di dalam proses perubahan daripada identiti kolektif kepada tingkah-laku yang kolektif. Selaras dengan perkembangan media sosial terutamanya dalam pertukaran maklumat, ia telah mendapat perhatian daripada banyak pihak terutamanya para pakar. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meninjau peranan transnational TV di negara-negara demokratik apabila berlakunya politik internet yang memberikan impak kepada peranan media. Oleh sebab itu, kajian ini merupakan satu usaha untuk menilai liputan berita daripada pihak BBC Parsi TV (BBCPTV) selepas 2009 gerakan "Hijau Iran". Peranan BBCPTV sebagai sumber maklumat yang boleh dipercayai sangat digalakkan disebabkan, peningkatan nilai kewartawanan di kalangan rakyat dan kandungan yang dihasilkan oleh pengguna (UGC) semasa krisis politik di Iran. Dengan menggunakan kritikal wacana analisis (Critical Discourse Analysis) yang di perkenalkan oleh Fairclough (1989), artikel ini mengusahakan rangka kerja Teori Konstruktivisme pendekatan untuk menilai sama ada wacana di BBCPTV, bagi tempoh 2009-2011, selaras dengan kehendak dan matlamat pemimpin-pemimpin hijau (Green leaders). Hasil kajian ini terbukti bahawa wacana di BBCPTV melalui framing tertentu, mengesahkan matlamat gerakan dan kesahihan di Republik Islam Iran.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and above all, I praise God, the almighty for providing me this opportunity and granting me the capability to proceed successfully. Definitely, undertaking this journey has been truly a life-changing experience for me and it would not have been possible to do without the support and guidance that I received from many people. I would like to extend my special thanks to my supervisor, Associate Prof. Datin Dr. Hasmah Binti Zanuddin. Actually words cannot express how grateful I am to you. You are excellent example of a compassionate teacher that I have never seen before. Your brilliant advice on both research as well as on my career have been priceless.

My sincere thanks also goes to my co-supervisor, Associate Prof. Dr. Jatswan Singh for your insightful comments and suggestions. Without your precious support, it would not be possible to conduct this research.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to my beloved husband, Hamid, for full-supporting me throughout this tough experience and to my beloved daughter Kimiya, for being such a good girl always cheering me up.

A special thanks to my family, specially my mother, for all of the sacrifices and spiritual support that you have made on my behalf.

I am also very grateful to all those at the faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and particularly Media department office, who were always so helpful and provided me with their assistance throughout my dissertation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Abstrak.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	xii
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Charts.....	xiv
List of Symbols and Abbreviations.....	xv

<b>CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study.....	8
1.1.1 Iran Presidential Election Scenario.....	8
1.1.2 The Green Movement's Goals.....	12
1.1.3 Media in Iran and 2009 Presidential Election.....	16
1.1.4 BBC Persian TV.....	22
1.1.5 The BBC Persian TV Staff.....	27
1.1.6 An Overview of Iran-UK Relations after the 2009 Iran Election.....	28
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	31
1.3 Significant of the Study.....	35
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	36
1.5 Research Questions.....	38
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	39
1.7 Limitation of the Study.....	39

1.8	Research Design.....	40
1.9	Definitions of Terms.....	41
1.9.1	Social Knowledge.....	41
1.9.2	Social identity.....	42
1.9.3	Social Norms.....	42
1.11	Summary.....	43
 <b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURES.....</b>		<b>45</b>
2.1	Introduction.....	45
2.2	Social Movement Definition.....	45
2.3	Review Literature on Social Movement.....	48
2.3.1	Overview of Social Movement Theory.....	48
2.3.2	Individual-Oriented Approach.....	52
2.3.3	Relationship-Oriented Approach.....	54
2.3.4	Social Determinism-Oriented Approach.....	59
2.3.5	Combination of Three Categorizations.....	60
2.4.	Constructivist Approach of Social Movements.....	63
2.4.1	Constructivist Approach.....	63
2.4.2	Constructivist Approach to Social Movements.....	66
2.5.	Media Function and Social Movements.....	71
2.5.1	Media Framing and Social Movements.....	76
2.5.1.1	Conflict Frame.....	81
2.5.1.2	Attribution of Responsibility frame.....	81
2.5.1.3	Morality Frame.....	82
2.5.1.4	Human Interest Frame.....	82

2.5.2	Media Affection on Identity and Norms.....	82
2.6	Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....	86
2.7	Summary.....	88

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....90**

3.1	Introduction.....	90
3.2	Method of Research.....	91
3.2.1	Critical Discourse Analysis.....	91
3.2.2	Critical discourse Analysis and Media Power.....	93
3.3	Description of Data.....	95
3.3.1	Unit of Analysis.....	96
3.3.2	Data Collection.....	96
3.4	Data Analysis.....	99
3.4.1	Transcription.....	99
3.4.2	Data Coding .....	100
3.4.3	Data Recording/Instrument.....	103
3.4.4	Data Analysis.....	103
3.5	Summary.....	105

### **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS.....107**

4.1	Introduction.....	107
4.2	CDA of the BBCPTV Coverage and Practice of Constructivism.....	108
4.2.1	The Election Results.....	108
4.2.1.1	Description level of Analysis.....	114
4.2.1.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	117



4.2.1.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	122
4.2.2	Ayatollah Khamenei's Friday Speech.....	125
4.2.2.1	Description level of Analysis.....	130
4.2.2.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	134
4.2.2.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	139
4.2.3	Death of Neda Agha-Soltan.....	141
4.2.3.1	Description level of Analysis.....	145
4.2.3.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	147
4.2.3.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	151
4.2.4	Death of Ayatollah Montazeri.....	152
4.2.4.1	Description level of Analysis.....	155
4.2.4.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	157
4.2.4.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	160
4.2.5	Ashura Events.....	162
4.2.5.1	Description level of Analysis.....	168
4.2.5.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	173
4.2.5.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	178
4.2.6	Kahrizak Detention.....	180
4.2.6.1	Description level of Analysis.....	186
4.2.6.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	189
4.2.6.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	193
4.2.7	Detention of Green Movement's Leaders.....	194
4.2.7.1	Description level of Analysis.....	198
4.2.7.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	201

4.2.7.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	205
4.2.8	What is Khomeini's Legacy? (Pargar).....	206
4.2.8.1	Description level of Analysis.....	216
4.2.8.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	218
4.2.8.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	226
4.2.9	Who are the Plainclothes? (Pargar).....	229
4.2.9.1	Description level of Analysis.....	237
4.2.9.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	241
4.2.9.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	246
4.2.10	Interview with Ayatollah Montazeri.....	247
4.2.10.1	Description level of Analysis.....	252
4.2.10.2	Interpretation level of Analysis.....	254
4.2.10.3	Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms.....	259
4.3	Synthesis of Findings.....	260
4.4.1.	Fraud in Election (Social knowledge and norms).....	261
4.3.2	Green Movement (Social knowledge and identity).....	263
4.3.3	Iranian Identity (Social knowledge and identity).....	266
4.3.4	Islamic identity of the System (Social knowledge and identity).....	267
4.3.5	Identification of Iranian Authorities (Social knowledge and identity)...	269
4.3.6	Democracy and Structural Problems (Social knowledge and norms)....	270
4.3.7	Human Rights and Freedom of Speech (Social knowledge and norms)...	271
4.3.8	Legitimacy of Government and Executive Branch (Social knowledge, identity, norms).....	272
4.4	Summary.....	273

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>275</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	275
5.2 Overview of the Study.....	275
5.3 Discussion of Research Questions.....	278
5.4.1 Research Question #1.....	278
5.4.2 Research Question #2.....	280
5.4.3 Research Question #3.....	282
5.4 Recommendation for Future Research.....	282
5.5 Summary.....	284

## **REFERENCES**

APPENDIX A: Coding Sheet

APPENDIX B: Coding Book

APPENDIX C: Samples of the News

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1.1     **Iranian diaspora in support of Green Movement**
- Figure 1.2     IRIB logo
- Figure 1.3     The BBCPTV logo
- Figure 1.4     World reflection to death of Neda
- Figure 1.5     Construction of collective behavior by the media
- Figure 2.1     Tuch's model of social movement
- Figure 2.2     Tilly's model of collective action
- Figure 2.3     Conceptual understanding of knife
- Figure 2.4     Conceptual Framework
- Figure 3.1     Flowchart of the Study
- Figure 3.2     Sample of programs
- Figure 3.3     Coding Process

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Election Results
Table 4.2	Supreme Leader's Speech
Table 4.3	Neda's Death
Table 4.4	Ayatollah Montazeri's Death
Table 4.5	Ashura
Table 4.6	Kahrizak
Table 4.7	Arrest of the Leaders
Table 4.8	Ayatollah Khomeini's Heritage
Table 4.9	Plainclothes
Table 4.10	Ayatollah Montazri's Interview

## **LIST OF CHARTS**

Chart 4.1	Fraud in Election
Chart 4.2	Identification of Green Movement
Chart 4.3	Green Movement Information
Chart 4.4	Iranian identity
Chart 4.5	Islamic Identity
Chart 4.6	Iranian Authorities
Chart 4.7	Democracy and Structural Problems
Chart 4.8	Violation of Human Rights
Chart 4.9	Legitimacy of Government

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UGC	User-Generated Content
BBCPTV	BBC Persian TV
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IRIB	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
DC	Discourse Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis



*In the information age, it's not just whose army wins but whose story wins.*

“Joseph

Nye”



## CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

During and after the Second World War, states had not only tried to protect themselves through forming a union and associations, but also through creating a system of involved institutional interdependence states to gain not only international legitimization for their decision, but also to justify their behavior and receive assistance for their projects. At this phase it seems that psychological dimensions and public opinion received more attention in international policy to advance states' interests. Actually the 1930s and 1940s saw the birth of modern techniques of public opinion research (Berinsky, 2007). Given numerous attentions to the media as a powerful tool to control public minds, beside efflorescence of media theories like “CNN effect” theory or “manufacturing consent” at this phase, are testifier of special impact of media in political milieu. Thus, rather than assuming that the mass media influences or determines what the governors do, media power turned to be a source of political power and a crucial factor in the environment in which political power works (Kunelius & Reunanen, 2011).

The role of media in political world became more prominent when Joseph Nye in 1990 coined the term of “Soft Power” and describe it as an “ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes you want” (Nye, 1990, p.566) However, in addition, Nye emphasized that soft power is a more complex method for government to run, than hard power. His purpose has been clarified since the existence of some terms like “media war”, “soft war”<sup>1</sup> or “media diplomacy” or “virtual diplomacy” in international policies

---

<sup>1</sup> . Soft war is a key term that the Islamic Republic of Iran put it in top priority in its relationship with the West, and is a key concern of Iranian national security policy. The Islamic Development Organization of Iran defines soft war as: every kind of psychological war and media propaganda which targets the society and enforce the opposite side to admit the failure without making any military conflict. The subversion, internet war, creation of radio-television networks and spreading the rumors are the important forms of Soft

(Nye, 1990). Indeed, media came to be a supplementary instrument for soft power to shape the preference of the audiences.

Another key point to remember is that peaceful end of the Cold War changed not only the world order, but also debates in international relations theories. None of mainstream theories were able to enlighten defining the dynamic of world politics, but constructivism emerged to be a theory that can meet such demand when Wendt<sup>2</sup> expressed that “the cold war could be over if the US and Soviet Union did not perceive each other as enemy” (Wendt, 1992).

Alexander Wendt as the best known advocate of social constructivism, put forward the claim that core aspects of international relations are socially constructed, and given formed by social practice and intersubjective interaction. He discusses that the ideas, norms, social knowledge, culture, and understandings of social life are all socially constructed and rise out of social realities and that the identities and interests of actors are constructed by the shared ideas rather than giving by nature. The most important point of this approach has come up with his idea that “People act toward the object, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them” (Wendt, 1994). Actually, Wendt attracts the attentions to the psychological dimensions of state’s behaviors in international relations.

Regarding the core aspect of constructivism, it seems that this approach, not only enlighten the dynamic political world, but also made the role of media policy more prominent than ever in this arena; however, there has been no considerable research in this field or not in-depth enough.

---

War. Which is exemplified this war intends to weaken the intellection and thought of the given society and also causes the socio-political order to be annihilated via the media propaganda. (Islamic Development Organization, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Wendt (born 12 June 1958 in Mainz, West Germany) is a political scientist who is one of the core social constructivist scholars in the field of international relations.

On the basis of constructivism framework media content with specific framing, is able to present specific interpretation and construct the realities and knowledge for their audiences. No doubt this framework helps us to better understand some events like 9/11 in 2001 that altering the essential nature of international political space. In the light of the media diplomacy in this new political space, Bush's administrations and western media induced the impression of "we" and "others" (identity) and justify the "war on terror" as a norm to polarize the western world from Arabs and Muslims. Therefore, while state's identity is self-definition of national image which could affect national interests and pattern of interaction among the states, (Yu, 2004) accordingly, when the national image changes the national interests and state's behaviors, domestically or internationally, would change subsequently.

Now it is not difficult to imagine what happen when a state's national image and its social realities are interpreted and constructed by transnational TVs, from outside for the inside people. Most of non-democratic countries at first stage take the global networks and satellite TVs as cultural diffusion and "cultural invasion" but when it comes to their domestic political issues and in medium repression situations, it is realized as a threat to their national interests. Setting up the satellite news channels like CNN, BBC, Al-Jazeera, Sky News and MSNBC, with own specific regional "media policy", ended long-held monopoly by the states over the free flow of information as well as pave the way for their international and regional policy.

At the level of regional policy, these channels, put their audiences in a real identity challenge as individuals or as a community and nation; show that how they are seen and understood by far away others, and how this visibility influences their knowledge and

ideas of who ‘they’ are (national image) and may want to be as a member of particular national group. Furthermore, these services are able not only entrepreneur the new social norms but also most of time remind the socio-political norms that have been disturbed by the governors, who are not able to hide more behind the veil of secrecy. Of course it often has been carried out under what they call “humanitarian intervention” in non-democratic countries that in turn, could increase the level of social acceptance of new norms which are supposed to be applied.

It is noticeable that according to evidences, the most admission occurs when media dependency<sup>3</sup> and “heightened media need” occurs. It mostly happens when a community is engaging with social and political conflicts or in the threshold of a change. Obviously, lack of freedom of the press and private media in non-democratic countries promote the attractiveness of these transnational TV among the people who need to know.

The most notable demonstrations that occurred in Iran, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Syria provided an opportunity to examine how transnational TV news presented different interpretations of unrests for their audiences according to their owners’ specific “media policy.” For instance, the role of Al-Jazeera in the Tunisian revolution is brought up by Yahya Gahnoog (Gahnoog, 2011), or the perfect study by Anne Alexander and Maryam Aouragh pictured the role of these channels in Egypt crisis (Alexander & Aouragh, 2014). And the most important was the study of the role of transnational TV in Syria Crisis. Robert Mackey in his article discuss about how the Syria war is pictured by

---

<sup>3</sup> . Media system dependency theory (MSD), or media dependency, was coined by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. The notion of this theory put forward that media and their audiences should be considered within the context of larger social systems. MSD concentrate on the interconnection of social systems, the media, and the individual toward an immense interpretation of media effects. Accordance to this theory the more an individual’s depends on media to meet needs, the more important media will be in a person's life, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person.

Iran and Russia (Mackey, 2012). Actually different interpretation of these events by different news agencies highlight the important of “media policy” in political world.

Although these events were known by many scholars as “Facebook movements” or “twitter revolution” and attracted considerable attention to the role of social media, due to its velocity and short effects, but it should not cause our inadvertence to the role of transnational news channels which are armed by multiple-platform services like Facebook, twitter and other social networks. These organized channels with the most degree of reliability in comparison to social media, presenting a compelling coverage of events, minute by minute, try to create public sphere and intersubjective milieu, most of the times with their audiences’ languages for making close relationship and impression.

What validate their success in relationship with audiences is invigorate of user-generated content (UGC)<sup>4</sup> that completely change the landscape of social interaction, media outreach and consumer understanding which in turn has enhanced the importance role of these news channels during the unrests and street riots.

To give an illustration, Iran’s presidential election in 2009 is selected as a notable case and tangible subject for author as an Iranian citizen. On the other hand, the case of Iran is notable because Iran as an influential country in the region always receives considerable attention from western mainstream media, in 2009 was witness of widespread of protests after three decades since the Islamic revolution in 1979. In fact, Iranian presidential election turned to a controversial political event that changed Iran’s political figure in domestic and international level. Alleged large-scale frauds in the presidential election led to political protests and “Green Movement” that came

---

<sup>4</sup> . User-Generated Content (UGC) is explained as any form of media content which produce by users of social networks that are accessible through social media.

prominently into global media focus. In the absence of independent media and blatant censorship of riots by Iran's national TV (IRIB),<sup>5</sup> the story of the political upheaval was brought to the world by the protesters' extensive use of mobile phones and the Internet. International broadcasters, mostly sponsored by the United State and United Kingdom, covered the street riots, play by play and after the strict ban on foreign reporters in Iran, they were provided by the huge amount of UGC.

For Iranian authorities, these overseas broadcasters have been designed to foster and reinforcement of dissents, tend to blemish the legitimacy of Islamic Republic both inside the Iran and in the region. Among all transnational news channels, the BBC has suffered a serious attacks by Iranian authorities against its Persian service. The BBCPTV that was a new form of BBC Persian service since 1941, had almost lunched simultaneously with the presidential election, turned to the main source of news for Iranians who were always thirsty for their national news.

A glimpse at the 70-year history of the BBC in Iran and flexuous relations between Iran and Britain, and strong presence of BBC Persian service in all historical moments of Iran, put a seal of approval on what the directors of the BBCPTV are accused by Iran's authorities in order to orchestrate what they called "sedition of 88."<sup>6</sup>

Having said that, the 2009 Iran's presidential election and its aftermath greatly promoted BBCPTV stature and reputation. It turned to a channel that constantly reported the incidents for the Iranians inside and outside of the Iran. On November 2009, BBCPTV was award-winning of the Association for International Broadcasting, in London, due to

---

<sup>5</sup>. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, is the Iranian governmental-run media that compromise Radio and TV service. It is under full-control of the Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

<sup>6</sup>. 88 is solar year equal to 2009

produce the “clearest coverage of a single news event-television.” The award was for “the elections that shook Iran” (Clover, 2009)

What is evident in this research is highlighting the role of satellite channels, alongside social media, as purposive actors in international relations and media diplomacy arena. Although discussion about the role of these channels in foreign policy advancement is not the matter of concern in this study, the current debates will revolve around their possible impact on social movement as a source of political changes. Concentrating on the constructivist viewpoint of social movements and media, open a new way of studies in both social movements and media studies. Given the centrality of constructivist approach will be a great help to have a depth look at media functions and media affection on shaping the minds of audiences and their behaviors. Regarding social movement as a social behavior, the current research will evaluate the constructed realities and social knowledge by the BBCPTV to reveal possible impact of this service on Iran’s Green Movement. At the end of present research we will find if the BBCPTV’s media policy has been in parallel with Green Movement’s goals or it is just Iran’s authorities’ psychological projection.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

### **1.1.1 Iran Presidential Election Scenario**

June 2009 witnessed a significant event regarding Iran’s presidential election. It attracted the global media attention due to many issues such as Iran’s controversial nuclear program, Iran’s geopolitics as it is located between Iraq and Afghanistan in the Middle East, and the important role that Iran played in Iraq unrests and its support of

international terrorism. As a result, Iran's domestic and international political atmosphere before his re-election in 2009 was in serious crisis.

Ahmadinejad followed radical and challenging policies even in domestic affairs. His radical foreign policy led the United Nations Security Council to impose the sanctions which in turn put Iran's economy under hard pressures. Ahmadinejad was elected as the Iran's president after former president Muhammad Khatami who followed moderate policies in domestic and international affairs for eight years as a reformist. All these issues were enough incentive for oppositions whom the election was their last chance of survival.

The day after presidential election (12th June, 2009), it was announced by Iran's Interior Ministry that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected for the second time by the two-thirds of the votes ("Ahmadinejad Wins Iran Presidential Election." 2009). The news shocked Iranians and in a reaction to the election results they came to streets to show their protest. Their slogan was "Where is my vote?" as they believed that the government had rigged the election.



**Figure 1.1: Iranian diaspora in support of Green Movement**



Despite severe limitations and preventions the demonstrations extended in Tehran and many large cities throughout the country; without any attention to the Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei's public criticism. The demonstrations led to conflicts and clashes with the police, the symbols and photos of the opposing candidates were seen everywhere and the demonstrators wore "green"<sup>7</sup> scarves or bands in support of Mir Hossein Mousavi.<sup>8</sup> He was the reformist candidate and used the green color as a symbol of his presidential campaign. Therefore, the opposite movement was known as the "Green Movement" and used the green color as its symbol inside and out of Iran to support the demonstrators and their demands ("Timeline: 2009 Iran Presidential Election," 2009).

From the early days of the election, international media played a considerable role and covered all details of the event in news reports, blogs and broadcasts. They focused mainly on the massive size and peaceful nature of the protests against violent behavior of anti-riot police. On the other hand, according to CNN ("Foreign media supporting Hooligans," 2009) Iran's Foreign Ministry accused the international journalists to be "mouthpieces of hooligans" and "support illegal gatherings" and "targeting the radiant face of the Islamic Republic" ("Iranian Protesters Mostly Unfazed," 2009).

In the first few days of the event, Iran's national media ignored the demonstrations and instead, focused on the large number of the voters, describing it as a sign of healthy democracy in the country. On 13 June 2009, Ahmadinejad referred to the 84 percent participation of the eligible voters in the election calling the event as a "major blow to the oppressive world system and the psychological war launched by the enemy"

---

<sup>7</sup> . Green color was for Mousavi's campaign which was pervasive in Iran because of religious beliefs.

<sup>8</sup> . Mousavi, the reformist candidate was Iran's prime minister during 1981–89; that is, during the Iran-Iraq war (1980–88).

(“President Joins Sea of Celebrations,” 2009). He also blamed “Western-led media hype”<sup>9</sup> for the civil unrest and stated that the election was a great victory when all financial, political and propaganda facilities out of the country were all against the people. He pointed out that the most psychological pressure was arranged against the people of Iran. In addition, he called the protestors “dirt and dust” (“Dirt and Dust,” 2009), to pretend they were just a few. It made the protesters more irritated and they took a new slogan “we are countless.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also stated that the “Western Media” provoked people for demonstrations; he warned Iranians to induce by the “behind-the-scenes” enemy to irrigate riots in the streets; he also asked the leaders of the oppositions to enhance “unity and brotherhood.”<sup>10</sup> But his statements neither turn down the protestors’ anger nor prevent their street riots; however it was claimed that they were beaten and killed by the “unidentified gunmen” and hooligans (“Several Killed near Pro-Mousavi Rally,” 2009). Following the growing violence in Iran, what were shared by social networks’ users as well as satellite news channels including BBC Persian TV that coverage street riots and anti-riot police clashes with protestors, raised the international reactions to what was happening in Iran. In an official statement about the situation, President Barack Obama expressed that “people’s voices should be heard and not suppressed” (“Obama Says Iran Should Not Suppress People,” 2009). Many expatriate Iranians interviewed in the mainstream media, described the protests as attempts to overthrow the Islamic Republic. The Iran authorities attempted to control the global circulation of images from within the country by banning all foreign reporters from Iran. They also blocked access to

---

<sup>9</sup> . News oftentimes makes huge news waves on a specific story or event. The term ‘media-hype’ is used in discussions about self-inflating media coverage.

<sup>10</sup> . Friday Prayers Ceremony on 29th Khordad.

internet and subsequently social media like Facebook and cracking down on satellite dish as well as start to jamming signal and arresting the reporters who tried to capture the events on video or camera, attempted to return disturbed peace.

The BBC Persian channel has been received intense criticism by the Iranian officials of encouraging "illegal" rallies and provoking Iranian to riot against the Islamic Republic, and interference of the British Government, wanting “soft topple of the Islamic Republic of Iran”, a claim that the BBC always denies.

Meanwhile, due to ban on foreign journalists and reporters in Iran, The BBC was supported with significant amount of user-granted content, which often taken by mobile. Therefore, the importance of issue for the BBCPTV to coverage, this service decided to keep in touch with the Iranians, especially the protesters and the Green movement's leader, raise this question that if the BBC Persian is the bridge between the Green Movement's leaders and protesters to accelerate their goals.

Street protests and demonstrations continued, more or less, proceeded as long as the leaders of the Green Movement, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi,<sup>11</sup> invited the Iranians to demonstrate on 25 February 2011, in support of popular movements in Tunisia and Egypt. On the appointed day, protesters despite the strong presence of security forces, slogans against the leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei. But what happened before the demonstration, was arresting of the Greens' leaders to prevent their accompanying with demonstrators.

Although contemporary with putting the leaders under house arresting that has been continued till now, some political activists believe that the movement failed to access its

---

<sup>11</sup> . Mehdi Karroubi is a reformist cleric and politician, heading National Trust Party. He was the chairman of the parliament from 1989-2004, and a presidential candidate in the 2009 presidential elections.

goals, but the constructed deep fissures within the political establishment, despite passing over 8 years, is still a serious political challenge for Iranian authorities.

### **1.1.2 The Green Movement's Goals**

The Green was Mousavi's campaign color in the presidential election, however, in the post-election period, green became the color for all opposition and reformists groups. Even people who did not vote but were critical of the Islamic Republic of Iran began to use the color. Green soon appeared at public events, football matches, festivals and so forth.

It is noticeable that in existing and forming the Green Movement, fraud in election was just an excuse for all Islamic Republic's opposites who tend to achieve their goals with joining the protests and riots. The most fans worldwide, who were recognized as the pro-Mousavi's supporters, had never taken part in election. And many people who had been shot on street were mostly young generation who have no affiliation with any political group or party; like Neda Agha Soltan<sup>12</sup>, a young girl who was shot and become a symbol of the Green Movements. Her family repeatedly mentioned in social networks and TV programs that Neda had never voted and on the day of event she was coming back from her class and she has been among the protestors, unexpectedly. Definitely, most of Iranian diasporas around the world with "where is my vote" placard,

---

<sup>12</sup> . Neda Agha-soltana, a young girl whose death was captured on amateur camera and circulated around the world in 2009, encapsulating a nation's struggle for freedom in the aftermath of the last election. The last moment of her life with open eyes has global reflection insofar as President Obama in his Nobel ceremony referred to her indirectly and said: "the award must be shared with the young woman who marches silently in streets on behalf of her right to be heard even in the face of beatings and bullets."

never seen the ballot for years. Actually the riots turned to troubled water, and the opponents of the Islamic system try to catch fish while water disturbed.

It would be no exaggeration to say that there are no clear set of ideas have emanated out of the Green movement. Unlike most political movements which might arise and protest against their governors, the Green Movement announced its demands before crystalizes its ideas. Initially, the movement had just two main demands:

1. That the outcome of the 2009 presidential election be revision.
2. That the movement would stay on the streets till the first demand was met (Tafreshi, 2012).

After a while, Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi and the Green Movement supporters realized that they couldn't pin their hopes on such demands, broad the scope of protest to what considered as a sensitive area by Iranian authorities and its regional interest such as Iran's relation with Hezbollah and Hamas and so on. This principal had succeeded to attracting important sectors of people such as university students and some intellectual and government's opposite groups and quickly turns to association of any slogans against Iran's government. On the basis of what Iran's authorities called the "*Fetneh*"<sup>13</sup> the Green movement came into open confrontation with the authorities and targeted the "*Velayat-e-Faqih*"<sup>14</sup> theory, as the main pillar of Islamic Republic of Iran, to be reconsidered as an invalid political theory. Although the Green Movement's manifestos did not point out to separation of religion and state frankly, but implicitly emphasize on autonomy of religious institutions from political institutions.

---

<sup>13</sup> . "Fetneh" means sedition and Iran's Green movement has been named "88's sedition" by Iran's authorities.

<sup>14</sup> . Guardianship of the Jurist or Providence of the Jurist is a post-Age-of-Occultation theory in Shia Islam which holds that Islam gives a Faqih custodianship over people.

To organize the Green Movement, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, established the Council of coordination of the “Green Path of Hope” on August 15, 2009 (“Khatami, Karroubi join Mousavi,” 2009) The Council was introduced by Mousavi with this statement:

“The Green Path of Hope is formed for the sake of people’s rightful demands and for claiming their rights... the color green is the symbol of this movement; its slogan is demanding the impeccable implementation of the constitution, and innumerable self-motivated independent societies form the body of this movement” (“Mousavi on the Green Path of Hope,” 2009).

According to organization officials, the movement functions encompass numerous political parties, NGO’s and social networks. Mousavi emphasized that existence of autonomous social networks in the community are part of this movement. He also issued statements of the Council gradually, based on “critical move,” has been emphasized in the context of the current Iranian constitution. He remarked in one of his statements that the Green Movement with adherence to the principles and fundamental human values, moral, and religious and Iranian values that are ingrained in the culture of this country, has a critical move in order to refine the Islamic Republic of Iran according to constitution and respect the opinions.

If we summarize all those manifestos that had issued by the Green leaders we can point out the following objects as the Green’s goals and demands:

1. Organize a new presidential election, not under the supervision of Guardian Council<sup>15</sup>, but under the authority of an independent election commission, to hold free and fair election.
2. Freedom of all the political prisoners.
3. Freedom of mass communication, including the press, the internet, radio and television; override censorship and filtering the social networks, and authorized non-state TV to broadcast and recognition of satellite channels.
4. Legal authorization of all the lawful social and political activists, student or women movements, the NGOs and civil organizations.
5. Guarantee the fundamental rights of people, the freedom to assembly and rallies by enforcing the 27th article of the constitution.<sup>16</sup>
6. Prosecution of all those on charges torturing and killing the protestors, and their commanders.
7. Put an end to use of Friday prayers sermons for issuing illegal and anti-religious orders by the clerics, prohibit interference of cleric in governmental affairs, and considering the clerics as common people and abolishing the “Special Court for the Clergy” (Soroush, 2010).

Regarding the manifesto, the Green Movement’s leaders who were the production of Islamic Republic of Iran that their eligibilities already has been confirmed by Guardian Council before the election, now, after the election express doubt about the principal of Islamic Republic system and “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” and accused the system to inefficiency.

---

<sup>15</sup> . In Iran political structure, Iran Guardian Council of the Constitution is a council within the Iranian constitution with the authority to interpret the constitution and legal power to veto the laws passed by the Iranian Parliament, the Majlis, besides oversee elections.

<sup>16</sup> . Article 27 provides for freedom of assembly, "provided arms are not carried" and the assemblies "are not detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam"

Since the media has an central role in this research, it seems fair to have a quick review of the situation of media in Iran and also the role that the Iran's state-run media played after the 2009 election as well.

### **1.1.3 Media in Iran and 2009 Presidential Election**

Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting or IRIB is among the largest media organization in Asia and Pacific region and a regular member of Asian-Pacific Broadcasting Union/ABU.

Following the foundation of 1979 Iran Islamic Republic, mass media, television and radio came under the direct control of the supreme leader and were identified based on Islamic Republic's constitution<sup>17</sup> to "disseminate of Islamic culture in following the evolutionary targets of the Islamic Revolution." To that end, media should be considered as a ground for healthy encounter of different idea, but they must strictly withhold from penetrate and propagation of destructive and anti-Islamic practices. Thus, mass media including TV, radio, and newspaper run by government and free expression is consistently restricted if be in contrast with Islamic values and "national security" (Macovei, 2004).

---

<sup>17</sup>. Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1979). See: <http://www.iranchamber.com>.





**Figure 1.2: IRIB logo**

IRIB has branches in 45 countries worldwide, and broadcasts in more than 30 languages. People in Iran access to 12 domestic television channels, 4 international news television channels and 6 satellite television channels for international viewers, and 30 provincial television channels all around Iran.

Satellite television as a strong rival but illegal, provides far-reaching alternative to Iran's national TV. The widespread coverage of satellite television exploded in the early 1990s, facing intense debate in newspapers and within the Interior Ministry (Alikhah, 2008). By 1995, the setting up about half of million satellite dishes were estimated only in Tehran (Barracough, 2001) and consequently the onset of restriction on satellite dishes starting up in this year as part of efforts to restrict "decadent Western culture" and prevent what Iran's authorities call "cultural invasion." Although accesses to satellite channels are forbidden, it is the most important transmitter of culture and information in modern Iranian community. According to a survey, struggles to specify dependable census of Iranians who have access to satellite TV, displays the figure somewhere between 45-60% in 2011, and a 2012 polls showed that 96% of respondents consider it to be amongst their three most important information outlets (Marchant,

2014). It attracts the attentions, when Iran's Ministry of Culture announced that according to reports at the end of 2013, 72% of people in Tehran and more than 60% in Iran have access to satellite channels in their home ("Seventy percent of people access to the satellite ," 2014). It confirms the rotten monopoly of IRIB in Iran.

Over the past three decades, the Iran's officials have systematically supplied and reinforced jamming signals to curb and disturb broadcasts of opposition radio and TV programs which are based in abroad; what is called "war against airwaves." To that end, Iran's government has invested massive financial and human resources into raiding homes and destroying and breaking the satellite dishes and collecting television receivers to limit Iranian access to these channels as "weapon of mass deception."

The effort intensified after the disputed 2009 presidential election that ended in public protests. Satellite jamming is rejected by human activists repeatedly due to harmful waves.<sup>18</sup> One of the members of National Security Commission, publicly praised the act of satellite jamming, as he considered it a representation of the power and capability of the Iranian state:

"We should not look at satellite jamming as a negative phenomenon. In my belief, jamming is a power in our hands.... We do not have any problem with the scientific shows, but if a satellite channel increases insecurity within Iran, then we will use all our power, including the use of satellite jamming, to stop such channels from making our youngsters immorally." ("Jamming Is a Capacity," 2011).

---

<sup>18</sup> . Referred to as 'intentional interference' in technical literature, satellite jamming is a violation of Article 15 of the Radio Regulations of the International Telecommunications Union.

Besides all efforts to prohibit airwaves, internet service providers have been blocked access to pornographic and anti-religion websites. Widespread prevention has also aimed the favorite social networking sites such as Facebook and Tweeter, as well as some news agencies sites. According to annual report of Internet World State in 2014, Iran has had 45 Million internet users and the first place in Middle East.<sup>19</sup>

Utilize media, the 2009 demonstration was the second experience in political history of Iran. In 1979, the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, received vast popular support among the Iranian public by recording his sermons against the Reza Shah Pahlavi (king of Iran) onto cassette tapes while he was in exile in France, smuggling them into Iran, and distributing them throughout the country. Although today they may be obsolete, cassette tapes in the 1970s were a relatively new and important innovation in communications technology and played a pivotal role in the lead-up to an event that transformed Iranian history.

In June 2009, once again and after more than 30 years, Iranian experienced other sensitive moments that outburst of new media changed their social and political appearance in presidential election. On the other hand, before the election and outbreak of the protests, for the first time in Iran's history, people were spectator of controversial debates between presidential candidates in Iran's official TV, which surprised people as an unusual event.

On the other hand, foreign reporters were covering Iran's first televised and highly mediated elections for weeks before the protests, and IRIB celebrated the state's transparency and participatory democratic political process. But after the election and during the protests, the government placed strict reporting ban on the most foreign-

---

<sup>19</sup> . More information on: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats5.htm>

based media. It bespeaks that protest reports could not be verified independently as correspondents were unable to move around.

This situation motivated the Iranian youth to test their ability in “citizen journalism” after the election, which is considered as a huge shift in traditional journalism. Due to heavy state-crafted image and censorship, citizen journalist jumped to the forefront and relied greatly on New Information Technology applications to take upon themselves the responsibility to communicative and narration of what was happening to opposites, within and outside Iran. Therefore, under tight control of media, the burden of reporting on Iran’s election crisis and ensuing uprising was falling gradually on youths, who knew how to use social media networks to their advantages.

It also intensified since the Iranian authorities banned any type of political protest, in response to this restriction, Mousavi, put forward the opposite strategy. He described online social networks as impressive weapon and less vulnerable against government pressures (Kazemian, 2009).

Generally, it was obvious that the internet and social network played crucial role in the process of scale shift in Green Movement, “leading to broader contention, involving a wider range of actors and bridging their claim and identities” (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001). Events were posted on popular pages like Mousavi’s Facebook with more than 126000 fans and Twitter to report the events.

With restriction access to internet most people continuing to get news through traditional TV and radio, besides, satellite channels as an aid to social networks, have a compelling coverage of street riots minute by minute for Iranian around the world. Among them The BBC Persian TV appeared more snappy and vivid. Therefore, the

Iranian authorities turned their attention to restrict the Western correspondents and prevent flow of information coming in and out of Iran. Consequently, many reporters were confined to hotel rooms; others were thrown out of the country. But this had the effect of increasing the value of the citizen journalism and UGC more than before.

It forced Iran's authorities to inaugurate war over airwaves and satellite jamming and announced that collaborating with these channels is not just cooperating with a media organization, but it is working in cooperation with the intelligence services of the "enemy" and any cooperation with them will be monitored by the Ministry of Intelligence and the National Security Forces of Iran ("Working for VOA and BBC," 2011).

Since the satellite channels and specially the BBC Persian TV became a major form of transferring information, Iran's officials took it again as "soft war" and start to response seriously. They announced that the sale and possession of unlicensed satellite dishes and receivers in Iran is punishable under the law by fines and prison sentences. (Esfandiari, 2012)

Furthermore, according to governmental order, satellite dishes were collected from rooftops to block undesired transmission from beaming into Iranian homes. It caused Iran's authorities faced numerous criticism from within and outside of Iran. The war against air wave was illustrates by Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei when he spoke in a meeting with the students and scholars of the Howzeh of Qom:

"It is obvious that the confrontation between the arrogance with the Islamic Republic is changed in compare to the first decade of the revolution. In that confrontation they exercised their power, and were defeated. That was a hard

confrontation...However this is not the priority of the arrogance for confronting the Islamic regime. The priority today is what is called soft war; that is using cultural tools, through infiltration [of our society], through lies, through spreading rumors. Through the advanced instruments that exist today, communication tools that did not exist 10, 15, and 30 years ago, have become widespread. Soft war means creating doubt in people's hearts and minds" ("Bayanat Dar Jam-e Kasiri Az Basijiyan," 2009).

Since the compelling part of current case study is the BBCPTV, thus next part is dedicated to introduction of this service and its function in Iran.

#### **1.1.4 BBC Persian TV**

The BBC (Britain Broadcasting Corporation) Persian language television channel (BBCPTV) was launched on 14 January 2009, a few months before Iran presidential election. It is supposed to provide Persian-speakers with news, together with a rich mix of current affairs, features and documentaries, culture, science, business and arts programs, all broadcast in Persian language from central of London<sup>20</sup>.

It is a part of BBC World Service News with the same editorial guideline. The core BBC standards are accuracy, impartiality and independence. ("BBC Editorial Guideline," n.d.) The channel will cost £15m a year, funded by the FCO (Foreign Commonwealth Office) via grant in aid ("The BBC in the Arab World," 2008).

---

<sup>20</sup> . More information on: [www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2009/01/bbc\\_persian\\_tv](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2009/01/bbc_persian_tv).



**Figure 1.3: The BBCPTV logo**

Sadegh Saba, the former director of the BBCPTV, on the fifth anniversary of the opening the Persian TV, in an interview was asked to explain about that “how it is possible the BBCPTV budget be provided by UK Foreign and Commonwealth which is alleged has not any role in media policy and editorial guideline and he responded:

“UK Foreign and Commonwealth do such a policy only to increase Britain’s credit and prestige throughout the world.” He added: “Everyone around the world knows BBC and that is a great credit that leads to huge investments including BBC productions” (BBC, 2014).

The BBCPTV aims to broadcast program to more than 100 million Farsi speakers in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is available to anyone with a satellite dish. BBC tries to release the news, which were camouflaged by Iran’s news agencies; most of time targets the legitimacy of Iranian authorities. This channel and others like VOA (Voice of America) and many expatriate satellite televisions played significant role to portray anti-norms carry out by Iran’s authorities. The BBC Persian with its experienced staff turns to be a conduit of information for Iranian communities. Programs are also available globally 24 hours a day via [www.bbcpersian.com](http://www.bbcpersian.com).

After the Iran's 2009 election the BBC quickly became a forum for debate among Persian speakers from different backgrounds and regions; although the name of the BBC is glittering in contemporary history of Iran; since Nazi influence on Iran, the removal of Reza shah Pahlavi in 1941, in the UK-Iran oil negotiation during 1948-53,<sup>21</sup> in Islamic Revolution in 1979 and again in 2009 controversial presidential post-election.

Sadegh Saba, also explained the BBCPTV purpose to start its performance contemporary with 2009 Iran's election, with this words:

“It was just accidentally and unplanned project and If Iran had an election as usual, so, we covered it as usual” (BBC, 2014).

The BBC Persian's directors has been received strongest criticized by Iranian officials of encouraging "illegal" rallies and provoking Iranian to riot against the Islamic Republic, and interference of the British Government, planning soft topple of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a claim that the BBC always denies it. On June 23. 2009, Rob Beynon, the head of BBC Persian explain in response:

“The channel has reported the story impartially. Staff have risen to the challenge as they concentrate on a big, complex story, putting their opinions, and concerns aside.” He also added: “We have been very careful about not falling into the trap of becoming opposition TV. We have at no point said these elections were rigged. We have been very measured, so much so that we have had criticism by all sides.”

---

<sup>21</sup> . The documentary “Cinematograph” aired on 18 August 2011 on the anniversary of the coup. In it, BBC admitted for the first time to the role of BBC Persian radio as the propaganda arm of the British government in Iran. The *Cinematograph* narrator said: The British government used the BBC Persian radio for advancing its propaganda against Mosaddegh and anti-Mosaddegh material were repeatedly aired on the radio channel to the extent that Iranian staff at the BBC Persian radio went on strike to protest the movie.



Meanwhile, due to ban on foreign journalists and reporters in Iran, The BBC most of time was supported with significant amount of UGC,<sup>22</sup> which often taken by mobile phone. According to BBC reports, “they have been received 1000 email a day and 10 videos a minute from people wanting to take part in interactive programs.”<sup>23</sup>

Richard Sambrook, Head of Global News for the BBC, says:

“This audience content had a double benefit: UGC was valuable in helping report the story, but it goes beyond that because it gives a direct relationship between the service and the people of Iran and it gives them a level of engagement, a level of accuracy which you would not get from formal television coverage. So actually they’ve been able to turn a disadvantage into an advantage in that way” (Newman, 2009).

Professor Hesamoddin Ashena, one of the Iranian media expert, discussed about the BBC Persian from a strategic perspective in a panel held in Tehran in August 2009. He expressed that:

“What happened with the launching of the BBC Persian was that it provided a type of television that did not exist in Iran. We had not seen it with that quality before. It had been precisely planned to fill the vacuums in our media. In the areas where we had some limitations, they tried to fill those vacuums. Whatever you hear now is the voice of the Iranian people themselves. This is the height of the BBC's professional work and the height of its mischief” (“BBC and Media Vacuum in Iran, 2009).

BBC World Service Director Peter Horrocks said:

---

<sup>22</sup> . The term entered mainstream usage during 2005, having arisen in web publishing and new media content production circles. Today it is used for a wide range of applications, including problem processing, news, gossip and research through a variety of media.

<sup>23</sup> . Third report of foreign affairs committee 2009-10.

“This is an important time for the Iranian authorities because many Iranians are shifting to the BBC for impartial and independent news and information during this crisis. We hope that by adding more ways to access the BBC Persian television, Farsi-speaking audiences can get the high-quality news, analysis and debate they clearly desire. We also hope this will lessen the impact on other broadcasters who have been affected by the interference” (Sennitt, 2009).

The jamming resumed on 20 December 2009 soon after BBC Persian began extended coverage of the protests resulting from the death of leading reformist cleric Grand Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri.<sup>24</sup> Due to jamming signal originated in Iran, BBC Persian started transmission on other satellites and increased their broadcast hours in order to combat the interference. Horrocks wrote in response to satellite jamming:

“We have increased the number of satellites carrying the channel and technical changes were made to help reduce jamming on the original signal. However, more work needs to be done.”<sup>25</sup>

He added:

“It seems to be part of a pattern of behavior by the Iranian authorities to limit the reporting of post disputed election (Sennitt, 2009).

### **1.1.5 The BBCPTV Staff**

Following by the channel’s launch in 2009, the BBC recruited staff from inside Iran, those were young and pro-reformist. According to a document that has broadcast by Press TV, under the title of “Fox’s eye,” the BBC services recruit through BBC website

---

<sup>24</sup> . Hussein-Ali Montazeri (1922 – 19 December 2009) was a prominent Iranian scholar, Islamic theologian, Shia Islamic democracy advocate, writer and human rights activist. He was one of the leaders of the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Hussein-Ali Montazeri was one of the main critics of the Islamic Republic’s domestic and foreign policy.

<sup>25</sup> . Sources: Index on Censorship/The Guardian, 18 February, 2013.

which was offering online journalism course for Iranian. In one part of this program, a person who was arrested by the Iran's officials, confess to receiving money for his reports to the BBCPTV. Although Sadegh Saba, the when president, rejected any contact with whom was arrested by the Iran's official in charge of intelligencer.

Evidently, employed by the BBCPTV has a heavy price that the employees has to pay. While this is uncommon for World Service staff, the sudden change in circumstances in June 2009 does differentiate them from other World Service personnel. Since then they are not allowed to come to Iran and alleged their families have been threatened by the Iranian intelligence agent ("BBC Persian staff," 2012). Coupled with, according to BBC Trust Review in 2011, they had confessed that have inner conflict of reporting in a balanced and impartial manner while feeling personal anger and sorrow about events in Iran:

"It is very difficult for our journalists to report on Iran. They are often very passionate but they have to put their passion on the back burner."<sup>26</sup>

Also in this report, Head of programs, Sadegh Saba, has acknowledged that:

"One of presenter was crying after seeing a young girl dying on pictures from Iran. Then she put on her make-up and presented without any bias in her voice or words. We have trained 150 excellent journalists who are not just obeying the rules but believing them."

Moreover, it is noticeable that the most of the BBC Persian staffs are producer and presenter of the programs who done their graduation in abroad, mostly in London. Some of them used to work as a journalist or journalist-related position in Iran or even used to employ by the IRIB.

---

<sup>26</sup> . BBC Trust Review of BBC Persian TV.

Sadegh Saba, the former head of the BBC Persian TV (2009-2016) was the BBC Iranian affairs analyst for over two decades prior to joining the BBC Persian television. Saba joined BBC Persian Service as a producer in 1990.

It is noticeable that the BBCPTV grandeur was enhanced follow covering what happened in June 2009 in Iran. It turn to a channel that comprehensively covered the events for the Iranians inside and outside Iran. On 4 November 2009, BBC Persian TV was admired by Association for International Broadcasting (AIB) for the “Clearest coverage of a single news event” at annual global media excellence awards in London. The award was for “the elections that shook Iran” (Clover, 2009). It was 30 minutes document that narrate Iran street riots after controversial presidential election.

Again in 20<sup>th</sup> November 2009, BBCPTV was named the best news channel for its unbiased and fast news in complex situation at 12th annual Hot Bird TV Award in Venice, Italy (Tuner, 2009).

#### **1.1.6 An Overview of Iran-UK Relations after the 2009 Iran Election**

In the aftermath of the disputed election in Iran and its aftermath, the UK-Iran relations were further tested. On 19 June 2009, Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran, called the Britain government as the “most evil” of those in the Western nations (“Protest at Iran's 'evil UK' claim,” 2009), accusing the British government of sending spies into Iran to stir emotions at the time of the elections. Following the escalation of protests in Iran, two British diplomats were expelled from Iran in charge of “activities inconsistent with their diplomatic status.” Also Iranian authorities arrested a number of British embassy staff in Tehran due to their significant role in the recent unrest. And on December 29, 2009, Britain was warned by Iranian

Foreign Minister to state “Britain will get slapped in the mouth if it does not stop its nonsense” (Barker, 2009)

Unequivocal support of Britain was exposed when the Queen’s College, Oxford established the scholarship under the name of Neda Agha-Solata (Wardrop, 2009), a young girl who died during the Iran’s conflicts that have a world reflection (Figure 1.4). This led to a letter of protest to the college from the Iranian embassy in London, signed by the deputy ambassador. He wrote:

“It seems that the University of Oxford has stepped up involvement in a politically motivated campaign which is not only in sharp contract with its academic objectives, but also is linked with a chain of events in post-Iranian presidential elections blamed for British interference both at home and abroad” (“Iran Condemns Oxford University,” 2009). The letter also said that the “decision to abuse Neda's case to establish a graduate scholarship will highly politicize your academic institution, undermining your scientific credibility along with British press which made exceptionally a lot of hue and cry on Neda's death, will make Oxford at odd with the rest of the world’s academic institutions” (Ben, 2010).



**Figure 1.4: World reflection to death of Neda**

The Times addressed the issue in its news as “another nail into the coffin” of relations between Britain and Iran. And in response, a college spokesman said that “the scholarship had not been set up as part of a political decision, and if the initial donations had been refused, this would have been interpreted as a political decision too” (Kerbaj, 2009).

In November 2011, Britain closed its embassy in Tehran after being surrounded by demonstrators due to Britain supports for imposed sanctions over Iran’s nuclear program. Consequently, Iran’s London embassy was ordered to close. Tensions worsened after the closure of Press TV office, the English-language Iranian state broadcaster in London for violation of Communications Act.

## **1.2 Statement of problem**

Iran's post-election in 2009 and the other protests across North Africa and the Middle East, led the commentators to recognize that social networking plays crucial role in these events. During the protests common people shared their recorded evidences instantly with millions through websites, tweeter and Facebook and called for protests and mobilization (Hanska & shapour, 2012).

Actually social media have arguably given the voice to citizens that otherwise would not be heard. The new wave of new movements around the world, brings the role of social media to focus as a main force behind the popular movements. Paying significant attention to social media makes some scholars to recognize it as a catalyst for political change (Shirky, 2011). Naming Iran's Green Movement with "Tweet revolution", or Arab Spring as "Facebook revolution" suggest the special consideration of social networks as an affective factor in recent events.

For instance, Clay Shirky, while enumerating different example of social movements around the world found that public sphere existed by social media is able to considerably constrain the action of the government. He considered social media as a coordinating and low cost tool for world's political movements (Shirky, 2011). Brian D. Loader in his articles identified social media as a new technology which forming "the structure, identity, opportunity, and protest dimensions of social movements", enable the protestors to share their information and make relationship with wider political activists (Loader, 2008). And Summer Harlow referring to Rodrigo Rosenberg's death, considers the social media like Facebook as an online motivation that catalyst mobilization of massive protests (Harlow, 2011).

Emphasize on the role of social media as a catalyst is intricate when it comes to non-democratic countries like Iran. In case of Iran some scholars like Hadi Sohrabi, Jordan Bailly, Brad Stone and Noam Chen, focus attention on the unique effect of social media and consider it as a “new opening avenue for democracy in Iran” (Bailly, 2012) that allows Iranians to find novel ways around the restrictions (Stone & Cohen, 2009) to diffuse information, fast and undistorted, while retain their anonymity. The social networks enhanced the collective identity among the pro-Green movement and help to create a discursive opportunity among the community (Haghighat & Mansouri, 2010).

Although many scholars praised the role of communication technology, but noticeable theory reject the decisive and positive effects of social media, due to limited access to information transmitted and governmental control of society (Golkar, 2011), like what happened in Iran. However, attributing to “information cascade” theory, Shirky argues that in spite of restricted access to social networks in Iran, the people get enough information during the first week and before internet shutdown happened. Therefore, social media had its effects in the first steps (Fischer & Florian, 2013).

But what was remarkable in Iran after restriction of access to social media by the government was extensive news coverage by satellite and transnational news channels from outside of the country for the people live in country and Iranian diaspora, and in Persian language. Indeed, these channels appeared more powerful than social media to give voice to voiceless who did not have means to get heard.

The interaction and close relation between Iranian and foreign based news agencies was to such an extent that during the unrests and conflicts, even when the foreign correspondents were confined to their hotel rooms or thrown out of the country, what



would support them for full reports was citizen journalism. The reports were included in the photo, video and any footage about the aftermath of the presidential election that were sent to these channels' newsroom by ordinary citizens, in order to be narrated by them. Based on BBC third report of session 2009-10, the BBCPTV, had been incredibly provided by more than a 1000 emails, texts, webcams messages received daily from people who wants to take part in interactive programs. Richard Sambrook, Head of Global News for the BBC, says this audience content had double benefits:

“UGC was noteworthy reporting the news, but rather than it makes a close relation between the service and the Iranians who are engaged in their current issues. It enables them to change a disadvantage into advantage” (Newman, 2009).

Therefore, it seems that evaluation of the role of satellite channels in the Iranian Green Movement is not less important than social media if not more, while much attention has been paid to the role of social media; however the mentioned studies in this field could be a great help to evaluate the role of these channels while they are provided by multiple-platform services<sup>27</sup> like Facebook, Tweeter, Telegram and etc.

Therefore, as an indubitable truth, the transnational channels and particularly the BBCPTV, have ability to bypass the official bias and governmental news sources and give a voice to ordinary citizens in transforming the political landscape of their country (Clark, 2012). It seems that these purposive actors, with creating a new discourse opportunity, are able to create a public sphere stronger than social media. On the other hand, their credibility and international prestige help them to have an effective influence on capturing and holding their audiences' attentions. Indeed, that is what makes Iranian

---

<sup>27</sup>. For instance, the BBCPTV provided by Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and Twitter and try to keep in touch with their audiences and knowing their comments and point of views.

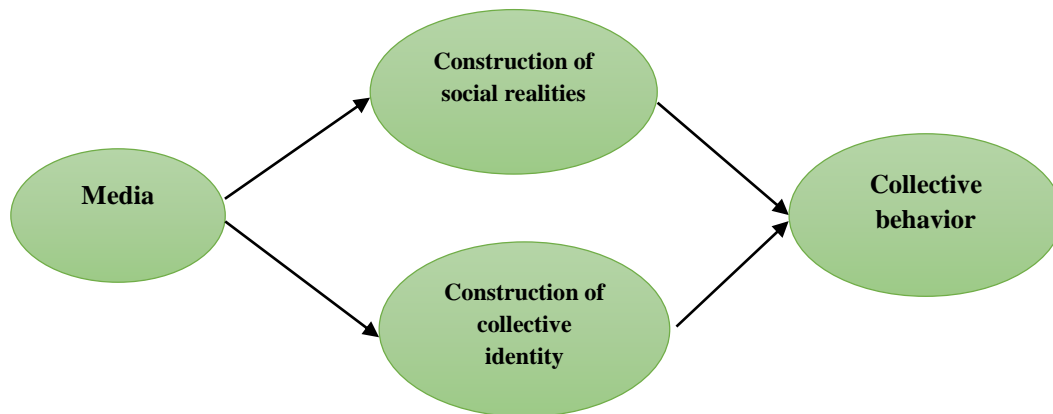
authorities to consider Iran in a comprehensive “soft war” with global powers; hence, started a full-scale war over airwaves and tried to jamming satellite.

Furthermore, what enhance the sensitivity of the issue is that the owners and directors of these channels insist on their neutral editorial guide, like what the BBC claims toward Iran. Since such media hide behind the phony guise of neutrality, and emphasizes on unbiased reports, in present research the author attempts to highlight and draws attention to the possible impacts of these services, alongside with social media, on social movements as a turning point for social and political changes.

In a general view, the present research, regarding social movements as a departure from collective identity to collective behavior and action, supposed to evaluate the role of media in this transformation. Therefore this research must be able to present a testable model to show how media could impact on social behaviors, while there has been no coherent attempt in this field.

In a broad research, the author found the constructivist approach as a comprehensive framework to explain individual and collective behavior. Also it was recognized that since 1980s onwards the constructivist approach has roots in the sociological (Hjelmar, 1996) and pretty in psychological dimension of social movements. Since social movements as a collective social behavior is effected by the number of factors such as attitude, feeling, social values, identity and norms, therefore, this model seems to be able to evaluate the susceptibility of a movement organization to construct a strong collective identity and impressive strategies that are outcomes of collective definition of political or social problems.

No doubt, in this framework, the crucial role of media will be more prominent in construction of conceptual space, interpreting the social realities, and translating conceptual problem to an operational problem. (Figure 1)



**Figure 1.5: Construction of collective behavior by the media**

Therefore, while this study is an attempt to evaluate the role that media and particularly, satellite channels as purposive actors could play in social movements, the constructivist approach put the study in logic ground. It provide us to examine the BBCPTV's attempts to influence or enforcement of Iran's Green Movements.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Given the centrality to the role of satellite channels in social movements, as the starting point of social and political changes, provides ample support for the assertion that the outputs of these channels are as part of “media diplomacy” of the country that they belong to. Although discussion on foreign diplomacy advancement in targeted countries by the owner of this channels is out of scope of the present research, but further research in this area, put their impartiality under the serious challenge. Indeed,

the concern of this research is proving out that rise of satellites with regional footprints and the spread of the internet give governments the ability to reach over the heads of the state and speak directly to populations to justify and advance their foreign policy in targeted countries.

On the other hand, considering the constructivist approach at the heart of discussion, the present research will be a practical example of showing how media in general, and transnational channels in particular, could effects and shape public opinion via construction of social or political realities. Furthermore, evaluation of the media proficiency in the world of policy and media diplomacy, in international relations is more tangible through international theories and rules, while the constructivist approach has a special place in discipline of international relations.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Existing serious political crisis and violent put the states on the threshold of threat and changes. Social movements as collective and social action underground a number of paradigms and political forms by the citizen who are not satisfied by status quo. Iran is not an exception to this rule. But what makes the Iranian movement different from other recent social movements is emphasize on the role of foreign-based news media that played in Iran's domestic affairs. According to Iranian authorities the demonstrations and street riots were orchestrated by transnational TVs and on top of them the BBCPTV, for the purpose of subversion of the Islamic Republic of Iran; however, for many scholars, Iranian Green Movement had been known as Facebook or Twitter revolution that had been come up from heart of Iranian society.

In this situation both national and international media outlets were led to innovative tactics which kept them from providing an impartial and objective investigation into the crisis. The BBCPTV as the most popular TV among the Iranians and the prime suspect among other satellite channels, with the highest level of news coverage of Iran, denied any interference and the biased reports of the Iran's events. According to directors of the Persian service, they just inform the people those who knowing is their right; although, it was not pleasant for Tehran's authorities that are used to control everything.

However, considering the background of the BBC Persian Service, for more than 70 years in Iran, provide overwhelming evidences to put impartial appearance of the BBCPTV in doubt, but to shed light on this issue the present research is organized to illustrate all ambiguities.

Evidently, the research data will be contained of the BBCPTV's programs which coverage Iran's unrests and presidential post-election since the beginning of Iran's protests on Jun 13 2009 up to 20 months when the Green movement's leaders were arrested. However this service tried to coverage variety of subjects including current affairs, science, culture and etc. within 8 hours in a day, but the political news in related to election were the main concern with this research.

Since the analysis of the whole news is almost impossible, the news were categorized in 7 important parts within 20 months. This categorization has been based on the most important events that had been happened during the unrests. And again, two or three news which were more to the point in expression of the event were selected. Moreover, two discussion platform about 2 hours, and a 20-minuts interview with one of the Green leaders were added to data to achieve reliable results.

The discourse of the BBCPTV will be analysis based on the Norman Fairclough's<sup>28</sup> approach, within the framework of constructivism and media framing. Since the core aspects of constructivism to accomplish of an act and behavior are social knowledge, identity and norms, this study is organized to gain following objectives by the end of the research:

1. To figure out the probable attempt by the BBCPTV to construct Iranian social knowledge, identity and norms in order to provide collective identity in support of Iran's Green Movement.
2. To find out the BBCPTV's discourse on Iranian Green Movement's demands in order to assess the probable companionship with the Greens Movement's demands through construction of the new images of social and political identities and norms.
3. To identify the BBCPTV's media framing towards the Iran's political landscape of the aftermath of the 2009 Iran presidential election.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The objectives of this research should lend support the research questions that is the fundamental core of the current research project. Based on the research objectives, the questions center on possible implications of the BBCPTV in aftermath of 2009 presidential election. Therefore, the research questions that form underpin of the study are as follows:

---

<sup>28</sup>. Norman Fairclough is emeritus Professor of Linguistics at Lancaster University. He is one of the founders of critical discourse analysis as applied to sociolinguistics.

1. How the BBCPTV influences in the construction of intersubjective space to challenge Iranian's social knowledge, identities and dominant norms in order to create a collective identity to form Iran's Green movement?
2. How the BBCPTV tries to construct Iranian social knowledge, identities and norms to provide Green Movement's demands and goals?
3. What is the political landscape of Iran constructed by the BBCPTV's framing, from birth to decline of Green Movement?

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of my study is The BBCPTV's news and programs in a special period of time, about 20 months after the Iran's presidential election till arresting the Green movement's leaders. It is included of 19 news and 3 discussion panels and interview. Following the Green Movement's goals and demands, the question of whether the BBCPTV played its part, in order to legitimize the Green Movement, will be answered by the end.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

Although the research will reach its objectives, but it could be a strong support to our findings if the author has access to statistic report of the BBCPTV's audiences in 2009-2010 or the number of the Greens who access to satellite channels and specifically the BBCPTV.

For the first one, I went two times to Iran Broadcasting Research Center as a researcher, and asked for the reports on this issue but my request was rejected by this organization due to their secrecy. On the other hand, since the access to satellite

channels is illegal in Iran, it is almost impossible for independent-researchers achieve this information.

Furthermore, most of the Green Movement activists, due to their security, live in anonymity or has been imprisoned, including the leaders, till now. Therefore, it is mere impossible to interview with them to debrief information about their source of news during the Iran's unrests. Thus, the present research is unilateral look at the issue without examining the effect of the BBCPTV on its audiences and their mobilization.

## **1.8 Research Design**

The preceding discussion provided an introduction that has been followed by the background of case study for better understanding of topic discussion. Then it is proceeded by the statement of the problem and significant of the study, objective and research questions, scope and limitation of the study and definition of core conceptions like identity and norms and their relation to the media.

Chapter 2 presents the comprehensive literature review on social movements, constructivism and social movements and the role of media in social movements, considering constructivist approach.

In chapter 3 the research proposed method, data collection and research instruments of data analysis will be described.

Chapter 4 includes the research finding and synthesis of results and finally in chapter 5 there will be a discussion over finding to reach a conclusive conclusion.



## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

Since the theoretical framework of research is based on constructivism, the definition of some core concepts in this approach has been recognized as a need by author.

### **1.9.1 Social Knowledge**

Social knowledge is concerned with everything that passes as “knowledge”, embodied in people, gathered in communities or group. Actually, in this kind of knowledge, the road to knowledge is through people, conversation, connections and relationship. Thus, in social knowledge, it is important that how we come to acquire information and understanding.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), the knowledge is socially created and distributed and “the everyday life we know is not something that has meaning, or even existence, outside of social contexts. It is, rather, something that is meaningful to us primarily by way of others. Thus, not only is knowledge socially constructed, that knowledge is also shared primarily via our interactions and communications with other people.”

The most notable vehicle applied in our everyday interactions is language in all its forms; be it through conversation, reading and writing, but what is prominent to understand is through communication and out interaction, since knowledge is socially distributed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Schutz, 1967). New media, in this research, considered as the most significant knowledge distributor that change the old world order in conveyance of knowledge.

### **1.9.2 Social Identity**

Social Identity explains group members' behavior, Answers the question 'who are we' in comparison to 'them' and descriptions of in-group and out-groups that resulted in "we are unlike the others." Therefore, our dependence on a specific group as a membership, with various beliefs and ideology, identified our social identity.

Social interaction, and distribution of knowledge, lead to new interpretation of 'self' against 'other' (Wendt, 1999) that ultimately, determines individuals' interests and behaviors towards each other. In Wendt's analysis, "interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is" (Wendt, 1999).

Therefore, the concept of social identity rises from social psychology and is the supposition of self and others that is formed during the time and through the relation with other actors; thus it is formed by self-understanding and the other actor's imagination of an actor.

### **1.9.3 Social Norms**

Norms have been basic promise of the politic studies for a long period of time. Sociologists explain norms as common sense that determine individual's behavior in society (Cialdini, 2003). Norms as "collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity", tell actors who they are, what is their goal, what role they should play. As Nicholas Onuf argues, ideational structures are both regulative (tell us what is cognitively permissible) and constitutive (tell us what is possible) (Onuf, 1989).

In the political world, If and when adequate actors, both state and non-state, have a common belief about what is considered to be ethically plausible behavior and comply

with, thus, it becomes a norm. Furthermore, considering the progressive interdependencies and multilateral essence of the international system, actors are more compelled to capitulate to international norms, especially those covering human rights and the environment. Therefore, collective actions and state behavior are forbidden or appointed by norms and the behavior of states will shift if the related norms change.

Whatever the actors pursue the common norms, collaboration is more likely to happen.

When norms are violated, it probably eventuated to inappropriate behavior and conflict.

In sum, the cooperation in collective action among the members of a group with strong norms is in a higher level of identification in comparison with a group with weak or no norms. Moreover, the strong norms support and reinforce the social identity with motivation of individuals to put aside personal preference in order to conform to group expectations.

### **1.10 Summary**

When members of a society organize a social movement, no doubt, social change will occur in consequence. Since the movements tend to spread beyond the boundaries of states and extend over the entire region, as “Arab spring”, or even when a movement fails to achieve its demands, it profoundly affects public opinion alongside the state’s status quo. Hereupon, it is no surprise if a local social movement is in central attention of regional countries and global powers and their news agencies.

The Aftermath of 2009 election and existence of Iran’s Green Movement, not only immersed Iran in a political shock, but also as a strategic country and its specific regional policy, grabbed the headline of international news agencies. Although, the

cyber activism surrounding the Iranian protests was unprecedented, but it seems the role of satellite channels like the BBCPTV is not ignorable. Moreover, since the BBCPTV has been introduced by Iranian authorities as the prime suspect in 2009 Iran's unrests, the main concern with the present research is evaluation the possible impact of the BBCPTV in aftermath of Iran's election and its influence on the reformist Green Movement.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURES**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This research locates itself on the role that satellite channels can play in social movements and in other words, how media is able to effect and construct social and collective behavior. Therefore the concepts that are needed to clarify by reviewing the literatures are included in social movement, media and social movements and constructivist approach in two field of media and social movements. Hence, the author has tried to stitch together various strands of the literature in order to provide coherent perspective and integrated understanding of the role of media in social movements. The review of relevant literature proceeds as follows:

I begin with a general introduction to social movements and try to reach a strong conclusion on social movement's framing process while reviewing the literature on this matter. Then the literature on social movements from the constructivism point of view and also media function in this framework.

### **2.2 Social Movement Definition**

Reviewing social movements through the history, we face with two main periods of movements: the old social movements which are seen in industrial societies (for example before 1950) and the new social movements existed currently in the postindustrial societies. It could be said that main contradictions in classes (according to access/ material possession) lead to the rise of the "old social movements" to compensate any imbalance in this material possession. Social movements mainly opposed with existence order till 1960s and as a result they were called as the abnormal

behaviors; it was supposed that the participants of these movements were not trained on the basis of social values and norms (Porta, Donatella and Diani, 2006).

On the contrary, the postindustrial society has led to more contradiction raised due to the difference between the individual's increasing freedom and autonomy and the increasing regulation of all life aspects by the society. And the "new social movements" has been increased in recent years, try to struggle against the inequalities in social aspects, mass media dominance, different features of capitalism in post-industrial era and the welfare issue.

In new social movements, the contradiction is basically nonmaterial and touches different spheres of life, such as issue of ecology, gender, religion, warfare, and governance. Perhaps, the increasing basis contradiction in postindustrial society explains the reproduction of social movements in such a society (Anugwom, 2007). Thus, it is indisputable that transition from traditional society to modern society paves the way for crises with social nature. Actually with the rise of modern states, social aspects and role of individual became more prominent in governance.

On the other hand, it is obvious that crisis and social movements are the symptom of a sick society (Karagiannis. 2009). To put in another way, social movements never happen in a healthy society that is conditional form of political and social participation (S. Mamay, 2010). That is to say, in these societies, due to social problems, as an unavoidable issues, the new social sciences were existed. While, social scientists paid special attention to social crises and movements, as important factors contributed in social changes, the wide spread of theories and researches advocated in this field to achieve better understanding of movements considering environmental changes.

Scholars have spent a great deal of time trying to understand where the movements come from, who participants are, how they succeed, and how they fail.

Another significant issue in this discussion is that the nature of any social movement relies on the problems or the situations that result in the emergence of that social movement. Social movements are agencies in a civil society; they react against the existing social orders. This inequality between the civil society and social order creates social movements. The radicalism of these movements or the extent of their intended change relies on the extent of this inequality (Anderson & Herr, 2007).

All these issues make it hard to provide a unique definition of the social movement. Freeman and Johnson (1999) believe that a social movement is not a political party or a political group as a stable political entity possessing political power and political elites. In their view, social movement is not an unknown mass trend without any goals. In fact, social movements are somewhere in between. Hans (1996) provides a simple definition of social movements. In his view, these movements try to make us aware of the needs which have not been unfulfilled or unsatisfied yet; they attempt to encourage us to pay attention to following different ways to decrease suffer and build hope. Tilly (1984) as a political expert defines social movement in a rather complex way. In his opinion, social movements are a series of interactions between those who hold power and individuals who claim that they speak on behalf of a lacking formal representation. These persons aware the public of the needs for changes in power distribution or exercise and support those demands publicly.

If one defines social movements as a collective effort to affect a change or stop its happening, to reach to social justice or to make hope for future, he will provide a very

restrictive definition because the objectives, nature and the factors making social movements are different. Thus, one should consider a social movement as a social phenomenon and a social behavior which indicates some primary need or intends in social system and at the same time he should consider the issue of “change” in social movements. It should be mentioned that a social movement can strengthen a desire which is not connected practically to a change in social order context. Review of literature regarding social movements makes the issue clear.

## **2.3 Review Literatures on Social Movements**

### **2.3.1 Overview of Social Movements Theory**

Social movements for the first time were introduced as a part of general debates in field of “collective behavior.” The collective behavior tradition, formed in 1920s, has been closely connected to the Chicago school and interactionism. Robert E. Park, a pupil of Georg Simmel, launched the term collective behavior in his Heidelberg dissertation “*Masse und Publikum* in 1903.” (Clark 1989 and Paul J. 1973) For him, the collective behavior, is the behavior of peoples under the affection of a thought that is common and is resulted of social interaction (Park & Burgess, 1924, 865).

The other approach that consider collective behavior within social attitude existed in 1960s to better understanding of social movements by Smelser and proceeded by others like Davies (1962-1971). According to their point of view “structural strain” and “collective deprivation” are the main reason of existing social movements.

In 1970s “resource mobilization theories” grew up by Anthony Oberschall (1973), William Gamson (1968, 1975), Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy (1973, 1977) and



Charles Tilly (1978). They all emphasized on “Social Movements’ Organization” as a part of social movements and separate social movements from collective behaviors.

Furthermore, there are two another famous theories in this field under the title of “new social movements” and “collective identity approach.” (Pakulski, Jan, 1991) which existed with some social movements like student movements, peace movement, women movement and est. to assess why and how they are existed. Habemas (1981), Melucci (1981, 1985, 1988), Offe (1985), Scott (1990), also fostered theory of “new social movement.”

The collective identity approach is associated with Touraine (1981, 1985) that has cultural approach to political movements like Castells with the same notion (Pakulski, 1991). He concentrated more on social changes than social reforms. Since political reforms are the improvement or amendment of what society takes as wrong and unsatisfactory issues, thus it implies the process of changing and covers it. Accordingly, social changing is ingredient of social and political reforms.

Regarding the mentioned theories in broad speaking, considering social movements’ theories in the field of sociology, makes necessary a theorist clarifies his/her position in relation to three concepts: human being or individual, society, and the interaction between individuals and society. This helps us to have a new and comprehensive approach to social movements’ literatures while we consider actors, relations and social conditions as three dimensions of a social movement. Looking at one limited cognitive side and ignoring the other side could limit our perception and recognition of social facts.

In practical research, a movement's goals and directions are characterized accordance to what the research focuses on. Emphasize on society, shows the social context which movement has occurred in it and study of actors tell us who is or are the creator(s) of social movement. To be exact, individualist approach is obvious in Max Weber's works. He coined "meaningful action" and insisted on individual knowledge in social events.

Weber argues that social science is a great help to understand individual's action, however not all. He persuades people to distinguish, which actor's behaviors are essential to understand and which are not. Moreover, he explains the differences between "purely reactive behavior" and "active behavior." Purely reactive behavior is specified by the actions that are outcome of a physical issues, for instance, you are coughing due to something in your throat; and active behavior refers to meaningful action, for example, coughing to draw attention (Craib, 1997).

According to Craib (1997), Weber is concerned with "rational actions" that could be interpreted by sociology. Weber applies his own method called "Verstehen" to interpret social actions. He believes that if sociologists are interested in understanding what people think, their study will consider this method. According to Weber, explaining the results of an individual's social actions involves taking into account his beliefs, values and knowledge. Furthermore, Weber suggests that it is necessary to establish people's motives for their actions (Albrow, 1990).

Karl Marx discussed about the dominance of society over individual and pointed to the significance of social factors and their effects on individual's acts. Through his conflict approach he focused on that aspect of history which is interpreted materialistically on a

dialectic approach in analyzing. He also criticized the current political programs and social arrangements of reforms and revolutions (Giclu, 2014).

Individual and society are two realities with their special impact. Reviewing the history makes us aware of the famous people role concerning their specific situations, facilities and limitations. Without this review we cannot explain the events; in other word, ignoring the social situation, we do not do anything but storytelling.

Concerning the relation between individuals and societies, Giddens's "structuration" theory (1984) is the most credible and comprehensive among the other theories. According to this theory, social life is not determined just by social forces but it is something more than random individual acts.

According to Giddens (1984), structuration is to study the ways to produce and reproduce the social systems in social interaction. He states that actors are not intrinsically tended to sustained reasoning or existential reflection on the meaning of their conduct from moment to moment in everyday life, while "discursive consciousness" is raised at critical times when actors do their best and emphasize on responses to problems in order to decrease their anxiety and do social change (Giddens, 1984).

Generally speaking, for Giddens, subjective consciousness cannot be a source for meaning and action; in fact, he focuses on the significance of the praxis method as it explains large sections of human social action and interaction. Therefore, in all social systems, individuals and society effect on each other according to their properties and social relations that play a crucial role as a bridge to conduct individuals properties with social status and vice versa. During the time individuals who influenced by previous

conditions act under the available social facilities and limitations and try to change it (Whittington, 2010).

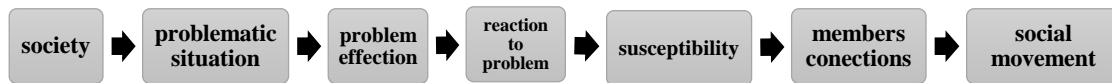
Discussion about different dimensions of an issue have different outcomes that each in turn is a serious challenge for mind of researcher. To avoid mental confusion and better understanding of the essence of social movements as a collective behavior, we will proceed the research under the three categorization of: individual-oriented, relationship-oriented and social determinist-oriented, due to achieve a new approach.

### **2.3.2 Individual-oriented approach**

In this approach actors and their psychological conditions, considered as a crucial factors in existence of a movements. For instance, Hans Toch pointed out participants' susceptibility about a problematic issue is the main factor in social movements. According to Toch, a group of people become susceptible and apply a special ideology to solve their problems. If the authorities have not any reaction to solve the problem, it is likely ended to a social movement. In this approach, all contributed factors are discussed through the lens of individualism (Toch, 1966).

Regarding this approach, social movement represents an effort by a large number of people who prefer to solve their problems collectively rather than privately, a problem that they feel they have in common (P. 5). What is noticeable is that for a person who wants to join a movement, must not only sense a problem, but must also 1) feel that something can be done about it and 2) want to do something about it. At the very least he must feel that the status quo is not inevitable and that change is conceivable (P. 11).

We can show this frame of mind as the below figure.



**Figure 2.1: Toch's model of social movement**

The other approach in this field is “relative deprivation” that rises from frustration-aggression theory. “Relative deprivation is the judgment that one is worse off compared to some standard accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment” (Smith, Pettigrew & Pippin, 2012). Relative deprivation refers to the public dissatisfaction when they compare their positions to others and realize that they have less of what they believe themselves to be entitled than those around them. Accordingly, the people, those who are suffering from lacking welfare and tranquility have more incentive to arrange a social movement to modify the status quo. Feelings of deprivation are relative, as they come from a comparison to social norms that are not absolute and usually differ from time and place.

The “mass society” theory is the other approach in field of psychology studying of social movements. According to this approach social movements are made up of individuals in large societies who feel insignificant or socially detached. Mass society theorists view social movements as phenomena which occur when previously unorganized individuals band together to change some parts of their social milieu (Hoffer, 1951). Social movements, according to this theory, provide a sense of empowerment and belonging that the movement members would otherwise not have. Social movements’ Psychological approach is criticized by many scholars. For instance Smelser argues that with concentrate on psychological variables, we cannot discriminate

between the occasion on which these variables will manifest themselves and the occasions on which they will lie dormant (Smelser, 1962).

### **2.3.3 Relationship-Oriented Approach**

In this approach social cohesions and structural factors, that come together with individuals to fashion a social system, are the main factors in existing a social movement. Reviewing the relation-oriented approaches, we will find the major concept of the contemporary thoughts. Blumer argues that besides “agitation” and “incitation” which are a personal factor, “ideology” and “circular reaction” are the main contributed factors on forming a social movement and collective behavior (Smelser, 2013).

Concerning “symbolic interaction”, Herbert Blumer (1986) discussed about social movements and believed that social movements are collective actions that lead to a new order in lifestyle. The actions are due to social unrests and both dissatisfaction with current situation and aspiration for a new system of life encourage them. Blumer (1939) also believes that social problems are produced to the process of “collective definition” not as a set of objective social arrangements which exist independently. Here, Blumer discusses about the issue underlying the studies which investigate the social problems in sociological point of view. One of the reasons of social problems is the way they are defined and conceived in a society; in fact social problems are not considered an objective condition with a clear objective structure. The emergence and end of social problems are determined by the collective definition process. Social problems have a root in collective definition process; in fact they are not the outcome of alleged objective area of social malignancy.

Any failure in understanding and respecting this issue leads to a remarkable weakness in social problems study and knowledge in terms of sociology. The analysis of the cycle of collective definition process helps to settle the emergence, career and fate of social problems. Blumer (1971) believes that this process can be labeled as five stages: a) social problem emergence, b) legitimating the problem, c) action mobilization regarding the problem, d) providing an official plan for the action and e) empirical implementation of the official plan.

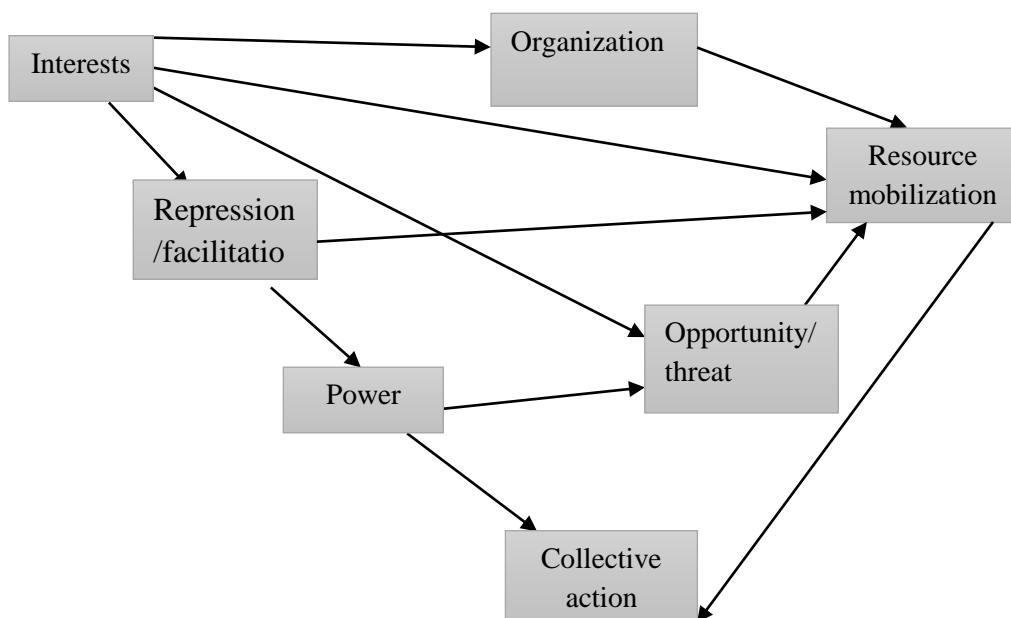
For Blumer, individuals' reaction plays an important role in existence of social movements while he focuses on communication systems and conversations to break out the social movements. In other words, existence of social movements is related to media, communication technology, self-consciousness, social structures, ideology and social frustration.

Based on a relationship-oriented approach, McCarthy and Zald (1987) emphasized on social organization. In their view, a social movement is a set of people's opinions and beliefs revealing the priority of changing some elements of social structures. They explained the "resource mobilization" approach which focuses on societal support and limitation of social movement phenomena. This approach investigates different resources that must lead to linking social movements to other groups, the reliance of movements on external supports to achieve success, and the tactics authorities use to control or incorporate the movements.

Based on a relationship-oriented approach, McCarthy and Zald (1987) emphasized on social organization. In their view, a social movement is a set of people's opinions and beliefs revealing the priority of changing some elements of social structures. They

explained the “resource mobilization” approach which focuses on societal support and limitation of social movement phenomena. This approach investigates different resources that must lead to linking social movements to other groups, the reliance of movements on external supports to achieve success, and the tactics authorities use to control or incorporate the movements.

While McCarthy and Mayerd Zald are the innovators of the economic side of this theory, Charls Tilly and Doug McAdam are expositors of the political aspects of resource mobilization. Considering economic dimensions, McCarthy explains collective action as a consequence of economic factors. He explains that grievances are not sufficient to discuss about creation of a social movement and access to control over resource is more crucial, but political model focuses on the political struggle instead economic factors. Actually resource mobilization is a process of creating different types of support for your organization (Tilly, 1978).



**Figure 2.2: Tilly’s model of collective action**



Charles Tilly one of the famous theoretician of “resource mobilization” believes, there are three main contributed factors in social movements: interests, organization and mobilization. He believes that the “interests” are the main source of movements. In his opinion we must consider the level of conflict between individuals’ interests and collective interests as a variable, effects on collective actions characteristics and its occurrence. (Figure 2.2)

According to him collective interests determine long term behavior and individual’s interests determine short term behavior (Tilly, 1978). According to Tilly “opportunity/threat”, “power” and “repression/facilitation” are three second-rate elements of importance in social movement’s process which determine the social conditions and effect on collective actions and mobilization.

According to Tilly social movements are known by people’s beliefs. A social movement occurred when a community with the “same beliefs” acts collectively. It is possible that community totally changes but if their collective action continued with the same beliefs, movement will be alive (Tilly, 1987, pp.9-10).

Since 1980 the theory of resource mobilization and its theorists were been challenged by other theories of social movements like “social constructionism” and “new social movements”, among them, Melucci that consider their approach as a partially theory, due to emphasize only on one dimension of social movements that is relations. As Melucci argues they explain how social movements mobilize, outfit and equip social movements’ members and never discuss about the process of mobilization or equipment. (Melucci, 1989) He also added that in Tilly’s opinion, social elements are in second degree of importance and individual’s interests are in less attention and he emphasizes

on the relations between individuals and society and somehow ignores the role of individuals and society. He is criticized by Melucci because of not talking about the condition of movements' existence (Melucci, 1989, p.21).

To study the contemporary new social movements, Alberto Melucci (1995) introduced the term "collective identity" which is believed as a theory in the collective identity of the social movements that is very systematized and comprehensive and have the most influence. He states that "the empirical unity of a social movement should be considered as a result rather than a starting point" (1995, p.43). He also asserted that "understanding how a movement succeeds or fails in forming a collective actor is therefore a fundamental task for sociologists" (Melucci, 1996, p.80)

He tried to find out the dynamic process that actors use to be able to discuss, understand and do an act in their common daily interactions. Here he tried to explore the connections between person's ideas and meanings and group's actions.

Collective identity as a process must define ends, means and the field of actions in term of cognition. A common language gives voice to this process and a series of rituals, practices, and cultural artifacts enact it. It is not necessary to unify or make this cognitive framework coherent; in fact, the framework is constructed by interactions and it makes some different and opposite definitions. The outcome of distinguishing self from the "others" and being accepted by those "others" is collective identity.

The gap between theories about the way of forming collective actions and the way individuals find motivation made Melucci unsatisfied; therefore, he decided to define an intermediate process through which people understand that they have some common certain orientations and based on that common filed they decide to act together. In his

view (1989), time could discuss about the collective identity process which includes emotional investments, active and dynamic interrelationship and cognitive definition. Emotional investments mean individuals can recognize each other emotionally. Active and dynamic interrelationship means how the relationship between individuals is activated. Cognitive definitions means how to make a framework that considers aims, methods and action environment.

Defining collective identity, Melucci focused on this point that this identity links source of individual's actions, facilities and social limitations. His model covers all contributed variables, but it is not possible to extract a practical model for all social movements.

#### **2.3.4 Social Determinism- Oriented Approach**

According to social determinism-oriented theorists, the “social condition” is the main factor in development of social movement. In 1962, Davies posed his “J-curve theory.” He argues that movements are more probable to happen when an old social and economic situation are in threshold of replacement with new one. He pointed to Dorr's rebellion, the Russian revolution, and the Egyptian revolution as objective models to protect the assertion. According to Davies, “the sharp reversal of development creates an intolerable gap between what people want and what they get” (Davies, 1962).

But in another sentence he argues that “political stability or non-stability depends on a special mental conditions or situation in a society.” Indeed, the revolution occurred not for food, freedom or equality (1962, p.6). He believes that more information we achieve about the dominant condition of a society and a community, we will better understand the changing (from satisfaction to frustration) in people's mind and the same condition

in different society may lead to different results. Therefore, considering these sentence and relative deprivation as a social cohesion, we can consider Davies among the relationship-oriented group.

Wilson argues that during the resource mobilization act of social movement form by the group of people who are dissatisfied and there are various factors contributed in existence of a movement, like leadership, friends, media, but ideology is the most important one among the resource mobilization's equipment's. On the other hand the effect of these factors is given by social structural conditions which determine the limitation of freedom for express deviant norms (Wilson, 1973).

Smelser is another professor who focuses on collective behavior with stress on “value added” theory (or strain theory) and refers to “Structural Conduciveness”<sup>29</sup>, and “Structural Strain” as important factors in social movements’ existence. Actually, he emphasizes on sociology of movement and doesn’t consider psychological dimensions. He search the social factors in collective behavior and in second steps exerts relationship elements to mobilize individuals for a non-institutional collective action.

### **2.3.5 Combination of Three Categorizations**

The main assumptions of the reviewed theories are as follow:

From the perspective of individualist, social movements are formed by request of people who are stimulated and gathered to solve their problems (Blumer and Tak). According to relationship-oriented social movements occur by resource mobilization of dissatisfied through an emotional state, belief or identities or it happen through an organization or special ideology (Blumer, Davis, McCarthy, Zald, Tilly, Wilson, Melucci) and at least in

---

<sup>29</sup> . Things that make or allow certain behaviors possible.

social-determinism-oriented approach, social movements are raised out of some social circumstances like peer review of social norms or values, the gap in development, cultural and social class conflict or political dissident (Wilson, Smelser, Davis, Thorne, Scott).

A combination of above factors and assumption, regarding our ontology can be useful in designing a comprehensive approach on social movements. Among all contributed factors in social movements, there are three main factors which play significant role in movement's existing:

- 1) Actors with their common sense of problems
- 2) Ideology
- 3) Social context

It seems considering these factors in analyzing and discussion about social movements lead to comprehensive viewpoints. It goes without saying that in first step a social impairment is the beginner of ideology, for many scholars in this field (e.g. Scott, Tilly, Blumer), that is the basis of social movements' cohesion to define their goals.

Actually, ideology specified the goals and show the way which take the members to their destinations. Besides, the rules and rituals of each movement are explained by ideology.

Interests, beliefs, desire of potential followers impact on ideology designing because the actors are the only consumers of this products. Thus, the area of influence of an ideology and that can absorb depends on its innovations in solving problems or providing interests, goals and beliefs of different social groups, institutions or even the member of constituencies.

Every movement includes three groups of actors: 1) the leaders; 2) somebody who distribute the leaders' thoughts and 3) the followers. All are affected by a special ideology and social context. The leaders commence the movement base on a new thought against social context. The first followers of ideology are the small rings around the leaders who try to introduce and distribute the ideology among the others to increase in number. Thus, when the followers come on the scene, the movement is started. Therefore, there are three different actions in every movement. "Cognition", that is the first step and upon the leaders. They distinguish a thought and try to make an ideology according to it. The second step is "distribution" and the distributors learn the ideology to transfer to follower and at least "perform" is the final steps of each movement.

Finally, movements occur in a social context that is place of performance where the actors act according to movement's goals. Social context could be either a limitation or catalyst for movement and this is determination factor in actors' role division. Therefore, the special role of actors is determined by ideology and social structure and this is what makes their behavior legitimacy. However, the actors have their own authorities in shaping their personalities and performance, but the social context indicates approximate limitations and expectations.

Taking this outcome in account, looking at social movement in light of constructivist approach, place the social movements' essence under scrutiny that is a great help to have comprehensive definition of effective factors in collective behavior.

## **2.4 Constructivist approach and Construction of Social Movements**

### **2.4.1 Constructivist approach**

Complex world needs complex theory to understand and Constructivism offers itself to meet such demand. By the end of 1980 and early of 1990, constructivist approach turns into a main international theory. It was introduced to international relations by Nicholas Onuf (1989) and it is a broad approach that encompasses “Weberian interpretative sociology, Symbolic Interactionism, variants of Marxism, Veblenian institutionalism, post-structuralism(s) and hermeneutics (Palan, 2000).

Different from Neorealism that only believe in the predominance of material power (military and economic power), and Neoliberal Institutionalism that only acknowledge a relatively weak influence of non-material power, constructivism recognizes the importance of “discursive power” (knowledge, ideas, culture, language, and ideology) as well as “material power” (Nugroho, 2008). Both powers interact to construct the world order. Discursive power works by producing and reproducing intersubjective meaning. It enforces how the material structure, phenomena, states’ identity, relations among states, and any other social facts should be defined and understood. With discursive power, the same material expression can be manipulated to produce a certain interpretation and silence other possible meaning. Thus, through its discursive power, the United States is able to present different interpretations for Pakistan and North Korea’s nuclear weapon. The former is not threatening and the latter is threatening power; Pakistan is not an enemy and North Korea is an enemy. These social identifications are not implied by material power or the distribution of material power. It is constructed through discursive power. Furthermore, all states are unique and have a

goal of defining political, cultural, economic, social, or religious characteristics that influence their policy making process.

Despite its broad character, constructivism has been popular in the field through influential writings of Alexander Wendt, who pointed out that “international relations constructivism draws selectively from social theory and is characterized more specifically by its idealism” (Palan, 2000). This “idealism,” according to Wendt, means that “structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces and identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Palan, 2000). Therefore, constructivism rests on the intersubjective dimension of human action. Wendt identifies constructivism as a tool for analysis, rather than a tool for predictions (Wendt, 1992).

Additionally, constructivism isn’t meant to explain anything, rather than explain a group of facts, constructivism is a point of view about how one might go about changing the political system; arguing that the international relations structures are “socially constructed” (Jackson and Nexon, 2002) and that “these structures shape actors’ identities and interests rather than just their behavior.”

Social constructivists believe that there is no meaning in the world until we construct it. Individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in. Intersubjectivity is a shared understanding among individuals whose interaction is based on common interests and assumptions that form the ground for their communication (Rogoff, 1990).

In an overview, based on constructivist approach, people give objects their meanings and can attach different meanings to different things. Generally people act toward



objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them that is “social knowledge” and The meaning in terms of which action is organized arise out of interaction is “social practice.” Identities and interests are produced in and through situated activity is “social identities and interest.” Therefore, identity is socially constructed and define their behavior and actions. Let’s give an example to clarify the issue. For example, if you show a knife to different person with different identity, it has different meaning for them:



**Figure 2.3: Conceptual understanding of knife**

For Peter, as a wrongdoer, it is an arm, but for John, as a cook, it is a kitchen knife. Therefore, Peter and John’s interaction to Knife could be in different way. Consequently, Peter’s activity or his social identity is likely “killer” but John’s activity or social identity is “cook.” Actually, the value of the material good is relative to the meaning and human action that it provokes and the meaning arise out of social interaction (Wendt, 1994).

With these in mind, the more important part of constructivist approach is what Wendt points out the definition of “self” and “others” which states attribute themselves and the other states to it. He explains that changing their ideas and consequently their interests, according to the definition of self and others, actors identified their interest and make

choice and behave. The cold war could be over if the US and Soviet Union did not perceive each other as enemy (Wendt, 1992).

All things considered so far, shared knowledge is as an important factor in constructivism, which plays a role in all aspects of the social structure, belief, interests, material values and practice. Thus, the deliberation of the role of media as a potent tools to share of knowledge, in light of constructivist approach, could prominent the role of media in social structure, more than ever.

In this framework media is not a mirror that reflects the reality but rather, via a specific discourse and framing, is able constructs social realities in that way to impact on social knowledge, identity, and norms and finally the attitude and behavior of its audiences.

#### **2.4.2 Constructivist Approach to Social Movements**

Many scholars such as Melucci, Eyerman and Jamison, Touraine, Gamson and Modiglian, Gerhards and Rucht, and Snow and Benford discussed about Constructivist approach. According to Wendt (1994) this approach suggests that people act toward objects like many other actors and based on how they mean objects.

Lippmann (1922) believes that when situations and events are analyzed by the professional lens of news organizations, public opinions react against not to environment but to the pseudo-environment made by the news media.

Since 1980s the sociology of social movements has witnessed a constructivist perspective which is a supplementary approach that social movements could follow to be able to understand the way through which social organizations and movements are made. If it is supposed that social movements are the outcome of social problems; then,

what is the determinant of social problems? The most important point in this regard is that scholars are unable to explain why some deviances, dysfunctions or structural strains are not called as social problems while some others are too. All types of deviances are not recognized as social problems; we cannot tell how and when dysfunctions or structural strains can be considered as social problems to lead the protests and movements. This is the area sociologists usually fail to distinguish while the constructivist approach has explained it successfully.

A constructivist analysis is composed of two parts: how the movement organizations can make useful strategies and powerful identity, and in which opportunities a society must defend the beliefs of a movement organization. According to Melucci (1989) and Eyerman and Jamison (1991), followers of the constructivist approach believe that studies on resource mobilization try to ignore the mediator processes that lead movement organizations and individuals to find the meanings of an event and interpret a situation.

As a result, the theory of social mobilization cannot understand the relationship between a problem, the related movement and its organization in a society. Because a problem in a society cannot lead to a movement in that society and a movement organization does not always use resources to get the help of supporters.

The main points of constructivism provided by Berger and Luckmann (1966), the famous founders of constructivism theory. In their book named “Social Construction of Reality”<sup>30</sup>, Berger and Luckmann (1966) wrote that individuals and groups who interact

---

<sup>30</sup>. The book “Social Construction of Reality” was written by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The book was published in the field of the sociology of knowledge in 1966. It was introduced as the fifth important book in sociology in the 20th Century by the International Sociological Association in 1998.

in a social system provide concepts or represent each other's actions. In their view, these concepts are changed into habitual reciprocal roles that the actors play in relation to each other. When other members of society access these roles, they play the roles in reciprocal interactions which are institutionalized. During the institutionalization process, meaning is included in a society. What people know, believe and understand about the meaning of the identity of a reality is included in construction the society (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

One of the first social movement theorists was Alain Touraine who tried in 1981 to discuss about the insights of Berger and Luckmann. In his view, a social movement is a historical construction and an institution without any role in society. He also believed that a structure is a property of activity. People always produce social structure but they do not act in it.

The cultural dimension of social movements was discussed in the late 1990s by Alberto Melucci in his book "Challenging Code" and by James Jasper in the book "The Art of Moral protests". Melucci emphasized on this point that social movements especially the new ones tend to create "collective identities". Both Melucci and Jasper focused on the importance of emotions in social movements in their theories while Jasper developed this idea more systematically.

Melucci (1989) was very interested in the constructivist theory regarding the social movement. He had contradictory ideas about Marxist and the deprivation theory in which collective action means the unified empirical data. Melucci believed that actors follow various processes make meanings, to discuss and to decide all which are known as the collective phenomenon. This construction aspect of the collective action focuses

on individuals' creative powers who act in a collective way. According to Melucci, collective action is the outcome of individuals' ability in defining the political struggle content and organizing their common behavior.

Eyerman and Jamison (1991) also worked on constructivist approach in social movements based on Marx and social movements. In their view, social movements carry new ideas and create new social and political identities. Therefore, these two scholars defined social movements as innovative forces of social change.

Among all theorists reviewed in the literature section, Herbert Blumer (1969), the American sociologist, provided the closet approach and used the term "symbolic interactionism". He summarized the perspective that people do something on the basis of the meaning of an especial thin. They extract the meaning from the interaction in the society and interpret them to make changes in them. Blumer provides the three main aspects of this issue:

- 1) Facing with things, people act based on the meanings they get from the things.
- 2) The social interaction among people and between individuals and the society make these meanings.
- 3) Individuals follow interpretive processes to make changes in these meanings to be able to deal with the things they face with.

Blumer believed that people do not just react to each other's actions but they interpret or define each other's actions in order to interact with each other. They respond each other not directly to one another's actions but on the basis of the meaning of such actions. Therefore, symbols and signification, also interpreting or ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions mediate human interaction.

In addition, Griffin and Emory (2006) believe that symbolic interactionism describes “thinking as an inner conversation”; in their view this inner conversation is “minding” that means a person delays in his thinking about what his next action is.

The second issue is that people in dealing with the things they face with use an interpretative process to handle in and modify these meanings (Kuwabara and Yamaguchi, 2013). Griffin (2006) believes that human beings naturally talk to themselves to find out the meaning of a difficult situation. However first of all, they need language. Prior to any thinking, they must interact symbolically.

Furthermore, Garfinkel (1967) suggests that any focus on the symbols and the discussed social structure of the society and meanings is the same as focus on the role that people are going to do. Playing a role is a significant mechanism which helps people to understand other’s idea to know how they mean things.

Thus, according to aforementioned theories and regarding the constructivist approach viewpoint on social movements, a social problem is known as a problem when people mean it as a problem. This fact that many situations that are considered as a political or social problems, are not problems in reality, confirms this subject. A subject must put away many social filters to be considered as a political problem (Lauer, 1976).

Here it should be better to point out again the two fundamental elements the constructivists focus on in making social movements: social movement’s ability to use powerful interactions to make strong identity and useful strategies, also the opportunities a society has to protect and develop the ideology of the movement, so that one can focus on the inner and outer factors that ended to social movement (Hjelmar, 1996).

Evidently, a constructivist analysis provides a conceptual space that can understand how various solutions for solving a problem are made. Constructivist analysis asks who attracts people's attention to a specific problem, how his/her claim clarifies the problem, and how those who make policies react to his suggestions. Thus, this analysis applies a bottom-up method. It follows a historical process to represent the political importance of a given problem.

Constructivist analysis suffers from a considerable disadvantage. This analysis does not concern the reason of a political problem and the way it is solved in various political and social conditions. Although, this approach focuses on the importance of the role media play in social movements.

Hereafter, regarding all literatures on social movement and constructivist approach in this field, we must reach a strong literature in relation to media function in construction of social behavior or in better word, collective actions and social movements.

## **2.5 Media function and Social Movements**

McQuail (2002) believes that media effects have been investigated for more than 50 years and during three main stages. The first stage continued from the first of the century to the end of 1930s and it claims that media were introduced in North America and Europe where a strong power to make ideas and beliefs modified life habits, behaviors were patterned by activities and imposed political systems in opposition of resistance. These perspectives were not on the basis of scientific investigations but on the sudden increase of the number of the audience and the raise of the attention that radio, press and cinema paid to the issue.

The second stage lasted from 1940s to 1960s and it was shaped by mass communication development in the United State and use of empirical method to ask specific questions about the effects of mass communication and their effectiveness. This phase has a great influence and provides a limited space to ask questions and to do many substantial studies among which one can refer to some influential ones such as the studies of presidential election in 1940 and 1948 by Lazarsfeld (1944), Berelson (1954) and the research by Hovlan et al., (1950) regarding the use of films to train and introduce of American Service.

The third phase continued so far focusing on new thinking, new evidences, and mass media communication and mainly on television and the press (McQuail, 1968). This phase, in fact, makes clear the effect of media in social and political events and in recently emerged social movements. Here, once more media and especially social media attract the researchers' attention to the crucial role of media as the pivot element in changing the sociopolitical aspects of life.

Social movements occur throughout the world and in different times of history, in presence or absence of media. Gladwell and Shirky (2011) believe that it is difficult to prove that recent uprisings are impossible in the absence of new media, although they argue that internet and social media emergence did not alter the fact that popular mobilization occurs; in fact, they changed the perspective permitting individuals to play roles by different rules.

It is noticeable that however the main concern with the present research is the role of satellite channels in social movements, but following the pervious discussion, as these channels are provided by different social media, for most of scholars the old and new



media enhance each other and that is hard to separate them (Figenschou, 2013). Therefore, what is important is that social movements need surely media attention to magnify and make their claims valid and media attendance in these movements as they create newsworthy events.

Irrespective of the kind of media, there is wide range of different ideas, from positive impact to neutral and conditional effects of media on social movements; someone like Rita Safranek that restricts the effect of media to size, ethnic diversity, and education levels of the population, the existence of a modern telecommunications infrastructure, and the amount of censorship used by the existing regime (Safranek, 2012). On the other hand somebody like Shirky and Garrett, theorize that media diminish the costs of sharing information and social communication, so it can remove the obstacle of group-formation and collective action; while other scholars opposing these opinions hold that information and communication technology have an insignificant effect while the government limit access to the news, especially in totalitarian regimes.

R. Kelly Garrett argues in his article “Protest in an Information Society”, that media causes the promotion of collective identity, and creation of community. Promotion of collective identity, construct the feeling among individuals that they are members of a larger community by suffering a common grievances. Communication technologies may be feed the collective identity across a scattered population, which enable the leaders to mobilize in support of collective action (Garrett, 2006).

In this regard Clay Shirky also believes that social media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) boost up political protests to be successful by sharing political information that lead to mass communication (Shirky, 2008), and

emphasize on the model of “information cascades” to argue for a positive impact of ICTs on political protests. An information cascade occurs when people observe the others actions and then make the same choice that the others have made, without considering their own private information alarms. A cascade happens, when people leave their own knowledge for the advantage of earlier people’s actions (Easley, 2010).

In this regard, Shirky discusses about the anti-regime protests in Iran in 2009: “the insurgency has nevertheless achieved the transition from distributed but uncoordinated discontent to being an actual protest movement, and part of that transition was achieved with these tools (social media). Clearly, the protests following the 12th June elections were aided by social media.” Shirky also points out to internet shutdown in Iran and explain his model that people got enough information about riots. In other words, when information cascaded, they coordinated some plan for their activities before their access to social networks or instruments were restricted. Thus, social media had its effects in first steps, although Gladwell points out that Social media may make the task of communicating information easier, but the task of convincing people to take personal risks is not lessened (Gladwell, 2010).

Gladwell argues that “the platforms of social media are built around weak ties.” Also he adds “the problem is that they think the Facebook friends are the same as real friends.” Actually he has a pessimistic look at effect of social media tools to forming social movements.

Philip Seib, the professor of journalism and public diplomacy and international relations with highlighting the role of transnational TV, points out that “the battle for heart and minds in the Middle East is being fought not on the streets of Baghdad, but on the

newscasts and Al-jazeera's talk shows and the next attacks by Al-Qaeda will emerge not from Osama bin Laden's cave, but from cells around the world connected by the Internet (Seib, 2008). He alleged that new media make people be more aware of what happen around them and learn more and subsequently raise the level of expectation of life as well as they be familiar with different idea and that is what may lead to protests and uprising for appeal of democracy, as happened in Middle East, among the peoples who have long lived without democracy (Seib, 2012).

At the same time, for Seib, satellite channels are crucial to public diplomacy at Arab world and Middle East. Referring to Arab spring in 2011, he believes that the "hubristic premise" of Western media has strongly diminished while region's media ecology has evolved and changed with global implications" (Seib, 2014).

Some scholars have opposite ideas. Lazarsfeld (1996) believed that mass media make audiences to know a subject but do not take any action (Sheedy, 2011; Lazarfeld and Merton, 1996). Therefore, Lazarsfeld believed that media do not make any social change, they enforce existing social values. Also, media do not affect society as most of people suppose so, they work by the three aspects of what they see as the problem. He measured three social functions of media and pointed to "enforcement of social norms" where the mass media uses people's exposure of events or behaviors to reveal any alternation from these norms to public view.

Literature review of media and social movements' interactions reveals the inability we suffer from in discussing about the role of media in social movements as these movements are not created by a single variable but by a set of variables which lead to interaction effects. The most important factors are: the social and political contexts

where social movements happen; conditions such as economic, institutional context, leadership, action and framing strategy; and democracy conditions such as the open space for government accountability, freedom of speech and press, access to social media and size of audience and political structure of a society.

However, the new movements' scholars discuss how social movements and their leaders deal with media. First, they emphasize on the direct interaction between movement and media; they investigate the strategies that movements and their leaders use to attract media's attention and find their ways into the news to collect potential supporters and get public support for their claims and political alternation at the end. Then, media review what the movements claim and how they arrange the protest and how mass media present them. And third, these scholars investigate possible results of media coverage about the movements support (mobilization), politicians and policy makers, and public opinion (William, Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993).

Lindsey (2013) believes that media change information into individual weapons that help the leaders to interpret the events, together with other non-movement involved actors. In fact, events do not express themselves; instead they are integrated with a larger story line or frame (William, Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993); they are formed by the movement's leaders or by media which cover the story through the especial frame.

### **2.5.1 Media Framing and Social Movements**

For better understanding of relevance between media and society and to analyze the role of media in public discourse and political communication, agenda-setting coined by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and used to display the role of the news media in political

discourse. This concept underlines the relationship between the amount of attention that a certain issue receives in news media, and the extent which the public considers the issue as an important matter. Actually, most of the time, what is considered important by the news media, is considered important by the public. While agenda-setting theory mainly focuses on which issues are reported, framing is about how issues are reported (Weaver 2007). A frame is the dominant perspective on the object/issue at stake (Jonsson, 2011).

The concept of framing has roots in both psychology and sociology and is said to originate from the sociologist Ervin Goffman who discusses framing as an interpretive framework that helps individuals to process information. (Goffman 1974; Pan & Kosicki 1993) In the area of policy-making theory and political sociology, the concept of framing is often used for analyzing how actors are actively involved in debating, defining, and setting a particular agenda and furthering its implementation (Rein & Schön 1993). As used in contemporary media studies, framing generally contains two main dimensions; on one hand, it refers to the way that certain aspects of a text are made more salient, and on the other hand it is about how these frames affect the way people perceive and construct reality. According to Robert Entman: to frame is to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” for the item described. (Entman 1993)

In studies of the role of media and journalism in public discourse, framing is generally used as a way to describe how different issues are represented in the news media. Framing analysis can be used to analyze media texts (e.g., news articles), and how

selection, focus of certain words, phrases, or ideas may contribute to shape public perception (Entman 1993 & Reis 2008), as well as focusing on how particular events or issues were represented or framed, and how connections between those events and their possible interpretations or solutions were promoted.

One of the best definitions of the concept of framing originates from Gitlin (1980) in which he describes the process as: “Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980, P.6-7). Entman (1993) elaborates on his definition by suggesting that frames are consciously selected by journalists such that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Thus, one can understand the term framing at a macro level as how the news is presented (and how this would affect the content), and at a micro level how certain elements in a news narrative would affect the reader. This process can be further divided in media frames and audience frames (Scheufele, 1999).

As such, the theory builds on the assumption that how the media discuss, reflect upon, or choose a certain angle to tell a news story (media frames) can have an influence on how the public views important social issues (audience frames), not which issues the public view as important (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Framing in social science includes some concepts and theoretical viewpoints about how individuals or groups understand reality and communicate with it. In fact, framing means social construction of a social reality through mass media, social or political

movements, and political leaders who influence on how individuals understand the meaning of words or phrases.

Gitlin (1980), Gamson (1992), Snow (1986) and Benford (1988) were the early researchers who investigated the framing task. In 1993, Gamson and Wolfsfeld wrote an influential article and then the outcome of media coverage of social movements and protests were divided into three sections. First of all, media affect those who directly feel sympathy; it also put effects on different forms of participations such as taking part in protests and help financially. Collecting people and their financial helps the duties of the mass media.

Second, media try to pretend that the existence of movements and their claims are legal that in turn can be an actor in the hands of power holders. In other words, movements need media coverage to affect politicians, policy makers, political agenda and decision-making processes. This is called the “validation” function of mass media. Third, media coverage leads to “scope enlargement” of movements. If the movement can access their demands by the media, they will focus then on those actors who did not engaged in the movements and did not do anything in financial donation. According to Gamson (2004) the main actor can be the general public.

Therefore, the role of media in mobilization, legitimization, validation and scope of enlargement emphasizes “collective identity” and how mass media play a role in creating such an identity. Thus, researchers in field of social movements, believe that people who act collectively must have “we-feeling” and distinct feeling of belonging together which is against “them.” Media can make such a collective identity (Rens, 2012).

Whatever a media be strong in induction and construction of “self” and “others”, it could have an effective role in social movement’s “diagnostic” and “prognostic” process (Benford & Snow, 2000) and motivational aspect of movements. Media via its specific framing present and interpret the social realities and implicate what is the problem and who is responsible besides what is the solution and who need to take care of it. Indeed, Frames operate in four key ways: they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies.

It is obvious that if a movement’s strategic goals be in line with media policy of a news agency, the framing lead to a common interpretation of interests that in turn has a persuasive effects on addressers. Likewise, when movement’s leaders tend to impassion collective behavior, thus the frame will be projecting with largest possible impact on audiences’ beliefs and ideology with constructing of social realities and influence on individual’s perception of social identity and norms.

All things considered hereunto, it seems that social movements’ theories, framing and constructivist approach are somehow intertwined. On one hand, reviewing social movements’ literature underlined the most important factors in existence of a movements that common feeling of problems and ideology are prerequisite in all movements. On the other hand, framing process come to be regarded as a schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to perceive, identify and label current occurrences and guide individual actions to collective actions.

Given that collective actions are constructed on collective identity (Hunt & Benford 2004) that is socially constructed. It rises out of social interaction and shared understanding of social realities and knowledge. How collective identity ended to



collective actions and behavior is what has been illustrated comprehensively while discussing on social movements in the light of constructivist approach.

Reviewing media framework literature has pointed out some of the frames that occur commonly in the news Neuman, Just, & Crigler (1992). Considerable various types of media frames are used in news coverage prevailing, including: conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality. Based on these frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) considered five news frames appropriate to farming analysis in crisis situations; although in this research four models will be used as follows (Seon-Kyoung & Gower, 2008).

#### **2.5.1.1 Conflict Frame**

The conflict frame is applied in order to display the conflict and dissident among individuals, groups, or organizations. Neuman (1992) pointed out that the conflict was generally used by U.S. news media. In Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) study, the conflict frame is of particular importance in controversial News agencies (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

#### **2.5.1.2 Attribution of Responsibility frame**

This frame is defined as “a way of attributing responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Semetko and Valkenburg found that the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in serious newspapers. (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)

### **2.5.1.3 Morality Frame**

The morality frame regards the events, problematic issues within the context of morals, social perspective and religious notions. According to Neuman (1992), the morality frame was usually handled journalists' goals indirectly through quotations or conclusions, rather than directly due to the journalistic norm of neutrality.

### **2.5.1.4 Human Interest Frame**

This frame “brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In crisis conditions, the frame motivates the psychological dimension that leads the people to the highest degree of negative attitude toward the crisis (Padin, 2005).

Now, what is remained unanswered is the role of media in construction of social values and norms and identity in relevant to promoting or resisting a social change. How media effect the social norms and identity?

## **2.5.2 Media Affection on Identity and Norms (Construction of collective identity)**

Both what one looks at and how he looks at put effects on identity. Hall (1982) argues that there is not a direct or automatic relationship between “represented” and “representation” (between what happened and how the event is talked); in fact, social and cultural norms affect it. According to Hall, choosing an especial representation of reality (to affect political process), media can help to reproduce the current dominant ideology which is accepted as “natural” or “obvious.”

The constructivist approach claims that common opinions, values and beliefs have a shared structure and affect the political and social activities strongly (Rues-Smit, 2001). Wendt (1994) also believes that people act to achieve the intended object and based on the meanings of the objects. Material world provides various meanings; then people use these meanings to define the reality and to mix them with other meanings and make new meanings dialectically; they institutionalize the meanings to make inter-subjective meanings. Surely, media play a significant role to head the meaning and provide that inter-subjective space to affect its audiences' social knowledge.

During creating collective or social identities and norms or during the process of making meaning by media, the role of media as a tool for social and collective cohesion should be discussed because identity is a source of meaning and sensibility and the communications media create sensibility.

There are two kinds of identity: individual identity where a person feels himself with especial abilities and features; and a collective identity where a person belongs himself to a social group. Constructivism defines this sense of belonging, a sense of being part of a collection, as self and others. How media define “we” against “them”?

Totally, norms should just lead behaviors so that individuals could adopt a relevant group identity. From a social identity point of view, normative behavior indicates the way of creating positive distinctiveness. Rubin (1998) believes that people should conform to those norms that make the in-group (we) identity better than the out-group identity (them).

Generally, based on the evidences born out the present research, the ways that provide media influence on social identity and norms, are categorized as follows:

1. History and culture in their turn are important factors in creation national and social identity, besides determine the social norms and makes a community able to explain to its fellow members, the history of myths and beliefs, that could be an element of social cohesion. A sense of group culture foster “Fellow feeling” that help a community to share perceptions, rationality, symbols and a sense of common destiny.
2. Social identity is built not on the basis of difference, but on a basis of shared beliefs and values. In modern societies, much of this sense of shared belief is communicated and transformed by construction of common discourse via media.
3. Categorization of “self” and “them”, which is effective factor in actor’s identity and consequence of fellow feeling and behavior. Media by constructions of social reality and knowledge, effects on in-group and out-group members’ behavior, maximizes contextual similarities within a group while pictures the differences with other groups. When people define themselves as group members they incorporate the group norms into their own identity. These norms then serve as standards against which they evaluate their own behavior.
4. Actor’s identities in constructivist approach are constructed through the use of language, the development of ideas and the establishment of norms. In this way, identities are never fixed; they are simply constructed in intersubjective environment. Among all factors, media, sometimes highlights or lowlights some aspects of identities.
5. According to Wendt political actor’s layers of identity consist of four layers: “personal identity”, which is attributed by personal thought to themselves and their

own sustentative definition depends on it; their attitude as a citizen or cotter, their understanding of freedom and personal right. “Labeled identity” which is affected by cultural labels like urban, rural, modern or tradition that are born within social interactions. “role identity” which is affected by social position and the role individuals play in their interactions like think tank, teacher, student or politician and at least “collective identity” which cause different definition between self and others, resulting definition of “we” that is consider as an ethnic group, national or nation. Wendt believes that each layer has an inclusive interest; therefore, media can influence the prioritization categories layers of identity in determining attitudes and rational formulation of the concept of rationality and the role of interest resulting from. It may priorities one layer to other layers and by this redefine actor’s rationality and behavior (prioritize of demands). In addition to formulating rationality and actor’s demands, it impacts on development of political actions, in other words, it affects the expression of excitement or prohibit participation and protest; violent, peaceful, and so on. How much media can be effective, depends on techniques which media use to manipulating and engineering public opinions and media ability to turn the issues digestible for audiences. (media framing)

6. As the above discussion, the “injunctive norms” refer to people’s beliefs about what ought to be done (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallren, 1990). “Descriptive norms” on the other hand, refer to beliefs about what is actually done by most others in one’s social group. It seems media have an impact on both especially descriptive norms. At the collective level, information about descriptive norms may be gathered by observing media depictions of trends surrounding a particular issue like protests and social

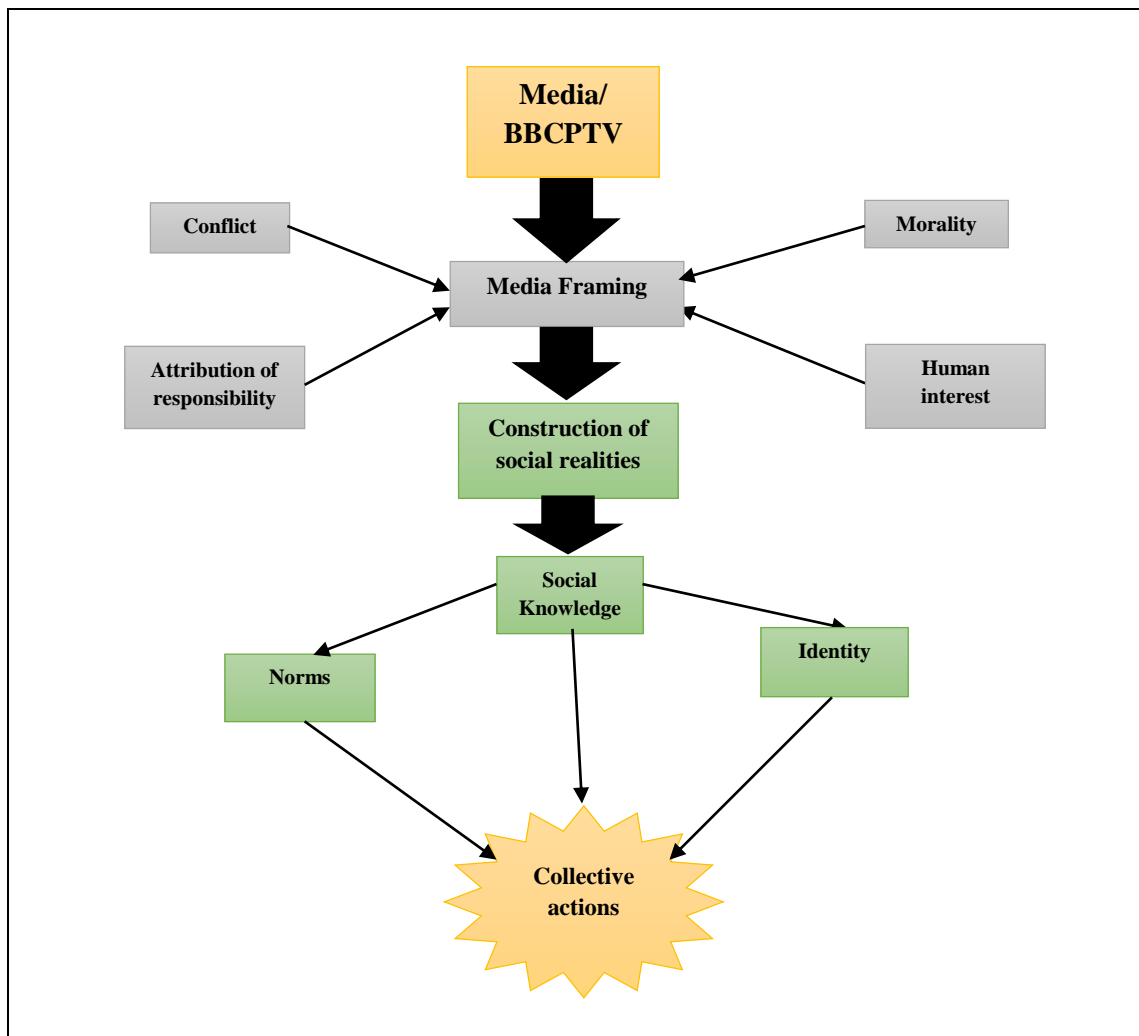
movements. Media could promote or proscribe a certain behavior. When people observe many others engaging in a particular behavior, they likely conclude that the behavior is socially acceptable; hence few social sanctions will be incurred by engaging in the behavior. Similarly, observing that only few others engage in the behavior could result in the belief that the behavior is deviant in nature. On the other hand, whether particular behaviors are construed as being socially acceptable or deviant in nature is likely determined by the perceived similarity between oneself and the actors and observations about whether the actors are subsequently sanctioned or rewarded for their behaviors.

Reviewing all literatures in fields of social movements, media function and affection, and considering constructivist approach toward social movements and media effects on behavior, the theoretical framework of present research must leads us to a comprehensive pattern that enable the author to reach a great and reliable answer to research questions.

## **2.6 Theoretical and Conceptual framework**

Considering literature review so far, and the objectives of the research, and also the case study that is the BBCPTV and Iranian Green Movement, the theoretical framework must enable the author to assess the BBCPTV's programs and explain how this service through specific framing, interpreted and constructed Green movement's identity and its strategies by effects on Iranian social identity and norms, in 2009 post-election events.

As it is clarified in the flowchart of research (Figure 2.4), the theoretical framework of the study is organized based on two approaches, namely, media framing and constructivist theory.



**Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework**

According to this framework, while the BBCPTV with specific media policy, tries to display the Iran's unrests and political dissident, it also attempts to introduce someone who must be accountable for Iran's disasters. Within this framework, referring to issues

within moral context and religious notions, motivate the psychological dimension of crisis conditions. Therefore BBCPTV's audiences, at the first stage were provided with a bulk of information and knowledge that are crucial in construction of social identity and norms which in turn effects social and collective behavior and in this case, to support the Green Movement's goals .

## **2.7 Summary**

The main achievement of this chapter was at first reviewing the literature of social movements and evaluate the determining factors in existing and forming a social movements; actors with their common sense of problems, ideology and social context are discussable in every society and social movement's existence, forming and mobilization that definitely have an important role in success or failing of a movement. At second look at social media through the lens of constructivism. Within this framework, social movement consider as a social behavior, and referring to "symbolic interaction" by Blumer, people act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them; and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation. It makes the role of media and particularly satellite channels, underling more than ever. Regarding constructivism, media via its specific framing present and interpret the social realities and implicate what is the problem and who is responsible besides what is the solution and who need to take care of it. (Diagnostic and Prognostic) furthermore, construction of "we-feeling" against "them" and collective identity are made by particular media framing.



The important points with this chapter is organizing a comprehensive research framework while considering all aspects of contributing factors in social movements and construction of this elements by the media.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology and procedures used in the proposed research. To that end, the research method of analysis will be outlined by the author while the methods of data collection and the selection of the samples, and the type of data analysis are concerned to clarify the details. Therefore by the end of this chapter the process and project of present research will be illustrated as it is shown in figure 3.1.

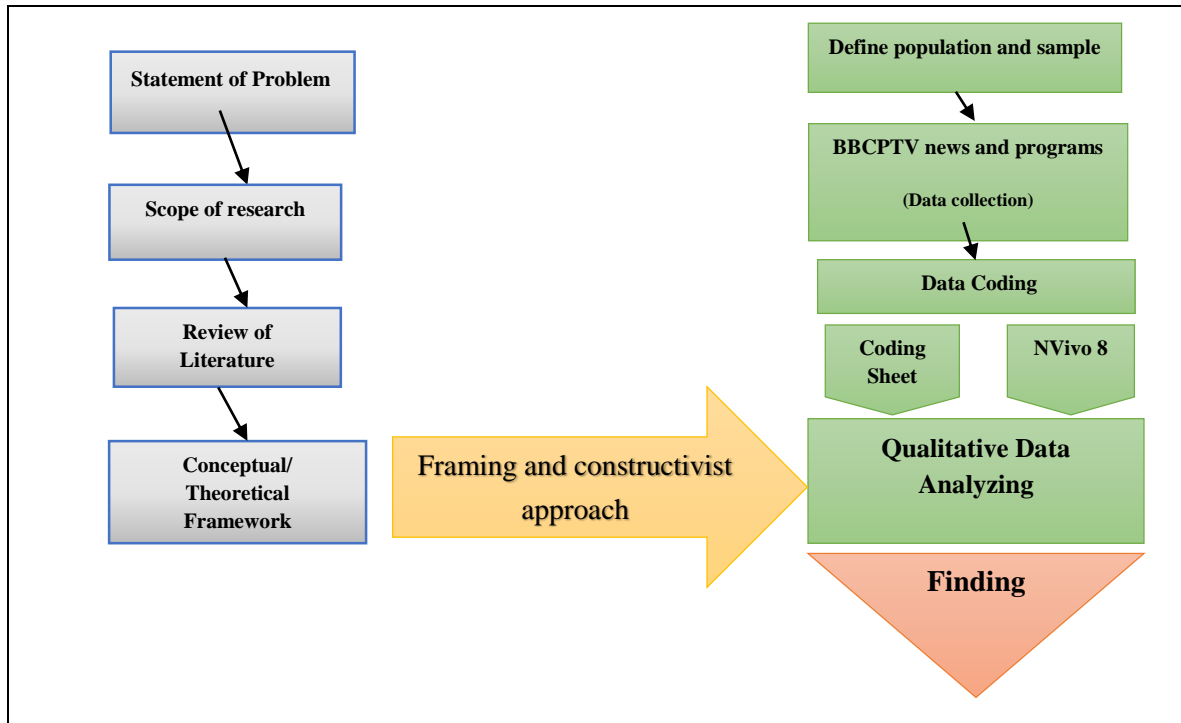


Figure 3.1: Flowchart of the Study

### **3.2 Method of research**

The researcher chooses qualitative content analysis research because it enables us to explain and interpret the interacted realities. Regarding research questions, critical discourse analysis as the research methodology is considered to challenge different aspects of constructing discourse by the BBCPTV's programs. Research discourse analysis will be in three levels while the core aspects of constructivist approach coupled with media framing (theoretical framework) will be considered during the analysis, particularly, in interpretation and explanation level.

Whereas, the media has a crucial and central role in this research, therefore, the status of media in discourse analysis will be discussed after having a glance but in-depth look at CDA analysis.

#### **3.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Since the 1960s and 1970s, Discourse is a form of language use, and Discourse Analysis (DA) is the analytical framework which was created for studying actual text and talk in the communicative context. Fitch (2005) believes that the early DA focused on the internal structure of texts (Fitch, 2005).

While some linguistics may concentrate on determining the formal properties of a language, the DA is committed to an investigation of what that language is used for (Brown, & Yule, 1983).

Explorations of how texts represent the world, in particular ways, according to particular interests, CDA provides opportunities to consider the relationships between discourse and society, between text and context, and between language and power (Fairclough,

2001). One point that distinguished CDA from other forms of discourse analysis is the terms of “critical.” Critical implies intervention and showing “connections and causes” which are hidden. (Fairclough, 1992), since they are not obvious to the individuals involved and hence they are not able to do something in return. CDA does not, therefore, understand itself as politically neutral (as objectivist social science does), but as a critical approach which is politically committed to social change. Indeed, it is perceived as a research tactic rather than a direction of thought or a model of analysis.

Although there is a subtle difference between Van Dijk and Fairclough, regarding their approach to CDA, the present research focuses on Fairclough’s approach due to his specific attention to ideological and power patterns in texts and social issues while for Van Dijk linguistic structures and political issues are more highlighted in analysis; however, Van Dijk’s point of view on media power is considered as an important and useful expression in data analysis.

In Fairclough’s point of view, there are three levels of discourse:

- 1) Description
- 2) Interpretation
- 3) Explanation

The “description” level at the first step, is the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text and includes labelling the “linguistic features” and describe the relationships among specific text, interaction and social practice. The viewpoint is that the linguistic and paralinguistic features are socially used by people in social relations. Thus, they are socially defined and have social outcomes.

At the level of social interaction, the role of the analyst is to “interpret” and configuration of discourse and understanding the meanings manifested in linguistic choices in an interaction and its relationship with text as a resource in the process of interaction. Actually, the discursive choices are considered as responses to the social restrictions that they assume to be operating in the specific situation.

And finally, the “explanation” level, include in the description and interpretation to offer an explanation of why and how particular discourse are vocalized, change and transformed in the ways that they are, in terms of a particular theoretical orientation towards issues of ideology and power relations (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999) that contextualize a situation. Actually, it is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects (Fairclough, 1989).

The important point in CDA is access to “how participants’ assumptions about culture, social relationships and social identities are manifest in texts and work ideologically to either sustain, challenge or change existing power relations” (Fairclough 2001, P.4). Indeed, that is where the analysis has gone beyond the “what-ness” of the text description towards the “how” and “why-ness” of the text interpretation and explanation.

### **3.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis and Media Power**

Social power in discourse analysis is defined in terms of the “control” exercised by one group or organization (here is the media) over the “actions” and/or the “minds” of another group (the audiences), influence the structures of text and talk in such a way

that, as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are, more or less indirectly affected in the interest of the dominant group that here it could attributed to the owners of the media (Van Dijk, 1995). Media struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice. According to Van Dijk, (1995) controlling the means of mass communication is one of the crucial conditions of social power in contemporary information societies. Indeed, besides economic or other social conditions of power, media may be attributed social power by their active or passive access to various forms of public discourse.

Therefore, media power is indicative of the potential power of media to frame minds of audiences, indirectly, but not directly their actions. Although the control of action is usually the ultimate aim of the exercise of power, but the control of intentions, plans, knowledge, beliefs, or opinions that are mental representations is presupposed that affect our social practice and relations. Media in the discursive system embodied the social realities, and refers to interactions that take place through a broadcast platform, although “it is including those of media power, usually imply references to power abuse or unacceptable exercise of power” (Van Dijk, 1995).

It is noticeable that media power of a group or institution (and their members) is in proportion to the amount of discourse type and properties they control (Van Dijk, 1995). It is obvious that their broader range and scope of access to public or other important discourses and communicative events in distinct circumstance is different.

Thus, controlling access to the discourses of government sessions, political meetings and specifically in our case, holding elections in national level, is a manifestation of power because of the consequent of such discourse and decision making may seriously

affect the lives of many people; The more people affected, the larger the scope of discursive power.

In a simple sentence, if understanding and public opinion engineering is resulted of social sharing knowledge, then control of such knowledge may indirectly control understanding. Thus, the news media and those of strategic control of knowledge is a crucial element in the control of discourse understanding and, therefore, of discourse access and the critical counter power of oppositional understanding.

On the other hand the settled way of thinking or feeling about an issue known as attitudes. Whereas control of knowledge influences understanding, control of attitudes influences evaluation and behaviors. It was assumed that attitude was the key to understanding human behavior, which is extensible to social movement as collective behavior. Therefore, the media in particular, has the ability to influence social realities and persuade individuals to think or act in a certain way, which in turn constructs their social belief. Also the constructed social reality consequently has the ability to create, justify, and influence social meaning, action, and power.

According to what has been mentioned so far, considering discourse analysis within constructivism framework and emphasizing on constructing realities, social identities and beliefs, could be a great help in comprehension of media power in construction of discourse.

### **3.3 Description of Data**

In this research the BBCPTV has been selected among other Persian satellite TV, for some reasons. First, concurrency of the inauguration of the BBC Persian TV with Iran's

protests raises the question that it was pre-designed by the UK government to interfere in the domestic affairs of Iran, as usual. Second, BBC is the main accused and the prime suspect during the protests by Iranian authorities up to orchestrate the riots. Third and above all is the BBC Persian service background in Iran in historical moment and sensitive political situation for more than 70-years, since World War II. And finally, what drive the author to select this case, is incontestable claim of the BBC's executives for their neutral editorial guideline, based on honesty and impartially in their coverage of Iran's riots in 2009. Therefore, critical discourse analysis of the news reported by the BBC PTV during the specified period will be accounted for research data.

### **3.3.1 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis in this research is the BBCPTV news coverage of the Iranian Green Movement from the existence of street riots. The news are consisted of 19 news and about 76 minutes. Furthermore, to reach, the better finding and supporting the results, the author added 3 programs to data: an important interview by the BBCPTV with one of the former senior official, who was known as spiritual leader of the Green Movement (about 20 minutes), coupled with two professional analytical discussion panels broadcast by the BBCPTV (about 2 hours). In fact, the controversial interview and discussion panels provide the seal of approval on research findings.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection**

As the world news agencies focuses on aftermath of Iran's presidential election, the BBCPTV turned to vital in getting news from Iran to the rests of the international



community. Therefore even insignificant news were covered by this service during daily eight hours of broadcasting in Farsi. Since the BBC coverage of news and its framing is too important for Iran's broadcasting, all the programs are recorded by the Monitoring Center, located in this organization. Access to the archive of recorded programs was a great help to selecting the research data. While the evaluation and analysis of all the news is impossible, thus, the author has considered some selection, so that important and controversial news and programs do not go away. To that end some criteria were brought up as follow:

First, however, some believes that the Iran's Green movement has survived and even grown since the birth, but in practice, there is no unfolding and open activity since the arresting of the leaders. Thus, to achieve the effective result, the research data belong to restricted time from the emergence of the Green movement, from June 13. 2009, until the arrest of the movement's leaders on February 24. 2011; about 21 months.

Second, during the Iran's upheavals, there were some sensitive moments that made Iran featured in a remarkable percentage of international news headlines, even some news agencies which were not Iran centered, tried to cover Iran's news in those days. Therefore, the 21 months of broadcasting are categorized based on 7 topical heading and important events, under the title of "source" (Figure 3.2). Evidently, at the first step, the collected data are limited to these sensitive events during the unrests, and at the second, some important titles that were somehow covering of other news are selected as the research data.

Sources	Headline	Date
1. The election results	1.Candidates defeat in their hometown 2.Karoubi calls the results surprising and ridiculous 3.Mousavi calls for demonstration	June 13.9 June 13.9 June 14.9
2. Ayatollah Khamenei's Friday prayer speech	4.Ayatollah Khamenei warns of street protests/ 19.Jun.9 5.Amnesty International: The leader's remarks, the green light of suppression	June 19.9 June 19.9
3. Death of Neda Soltan	6.Neda calls for freedom 7. Hejazi tells the story of Neda 8.Karroubi meet Agha-Soltan Family	June 22.9 June 26.9 July 28.9
4. Death of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri	9. Grand Ayatollah Montazeri passed away	Dec. 20.9
5. Ashura Events	10.Amnesty In.: Ashura must be the end of violence 11.Intense strife in Ashura 12.Parliament harsh reaction to Ashura events 13.Tehran Prosecutor: Organized violence of Ashura is the best example of waging	Dec.26.9 Dec.27.9 Dec.29.9 Jan. 9.10
6. Kahrizak detention	14.A journalist reports on Kahrizak 15.Amnesty In.: Iran's supreme leader do organize the independent research committee 16.Karroubi meet the special committee on alleged rape of detainees 17.Karroubi emphasizes on rape in detention	July 28.10 Aug. 15.10 Agu.24.10 Sep.2.10
7. Detention of Green movement's leaders	18.Arrest of leaders at discretion of Ayatollah Khamenei 19.Clerics criticized arrest of opposition leaders	Feb.28.11 Feb.28.11
8. Pargar	20.Plainclothes 21.Khomeini's legacy	Agu.20.10 Dec.29.10
9. Interview	22.Montazeri's interview	Dec.19.9

**Figure 3.2: Sample of programs**

Moreover, 3 more programs are included in this category (Figure 3.2, No.8-9) that are added to the collected data as the supplementary data in order to achieve a rich answer to the research questions. The firsts are under the name of “Pargar,” the most professional program, broadcast from London. The presenter of this program is Darush Karimi, and the invitees in this conversational panel are all reputable Iranians who are known due to their long political or social activities, mostly are refugees. The broadcast hours of this program seek special audiences who mostly belong to the educated class. The selected topics in this research are controversial issues during the Iran’s unrests. Alongside, an important interview with Grand Ayatollah Hosein Montazeri, one of the prominent leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 and spiritual leader of Green Movement, is considered for analysis. His harsh interview against the Islamic Republic system was broadcast the same day which he was died that put the Islamic legitimacy of the system in a serious challenge.

### **3.4 Data Analysis process**

#### **3.4.1 Transcription**

Since the whole collected data were in audio and visual type and also in Persian language, the transcription into written form for closer study was required at the beginning, and then translating to English language as an appropriate form to this research. Preparing written form help the author to involve in close observation of data through repeated careful listening, although it takes a long time.

### **3.4.2 Data Coding**

The analysis of qualitative research is in order to uncover and understand a great scope by using the data to describe the case and what the case means. Coding is crucial aspect of analysis.

It is not merely labeling the data, but it is linking them. It leads us from data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Richards & Morse, 2007). Start coding process need to look at text through the analytic lens. Here, the type of filter covers the lens, effects on perception and interpretation of data. A code could be a word or short phrase that indicates essential elements of the research. When codes are applied and reapplied to qualitative data, you are codifying; a process that permits data to be segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation” (Grbich, 2007). The situated similar code together according to a specific pattern, facilitate the development of categories and analysis of their connections.

In this research the “manual coding sheet” (Appendix A) has been performed by the author. It has been prepared based on research questions and theoretical frameworks. For each program there is a coding sheet which specifies distinctive features of the program at first page like the title, duration, source of news and some other descriptions. The coding sheet is coupled with “coding book,” which includes the definition of themes and subthemes that are used as references for the coding sheet. (Appendix B) Each theme or subtheme is marked with a special number. The coding book can be both, a great help for deeper analysis and improve reliability of coding and results.

Back to coding sheet, the theme/subtheme at first step help the analyzer to determine the storyline of interpretation. Since the alleged rigging in election was the origin of the Iran's unrests, therefore paying special attention to fraud in election (as an anti-norm) and Green Movement (identification of the Greens) are considered as two theme/subtheme of story that the data are coded by them. The second issue that has been always drawn international news agencies and the BBC Persian services is violation of human rights and democracy in Iran. Therefore, in my opinion, these issues have determining factors in BBCPTV's framing and policy.<sup>31</sup>

It is obvious that for all opposites' news agencies and the BBCPTV, Iranian authorities are responsible for Iran's social and political problems. Since they are all claimants of Islam and Islamic Law and democracy in Iran, thus, highlighting the religious identity of the Iranian Islamic system and their leaders by the BBCPTV is perceptible. And another point that is common in all social movements is legitimizing the movement's goals that the BBCPTV attempt to do it by delegitimizing the Islamic system.

Therefore, to figure out the BBCPTV's framing and its endeavor to construction and legitimation of the Green Movement's identity, the collected data are initially coded base on the following categorizations:

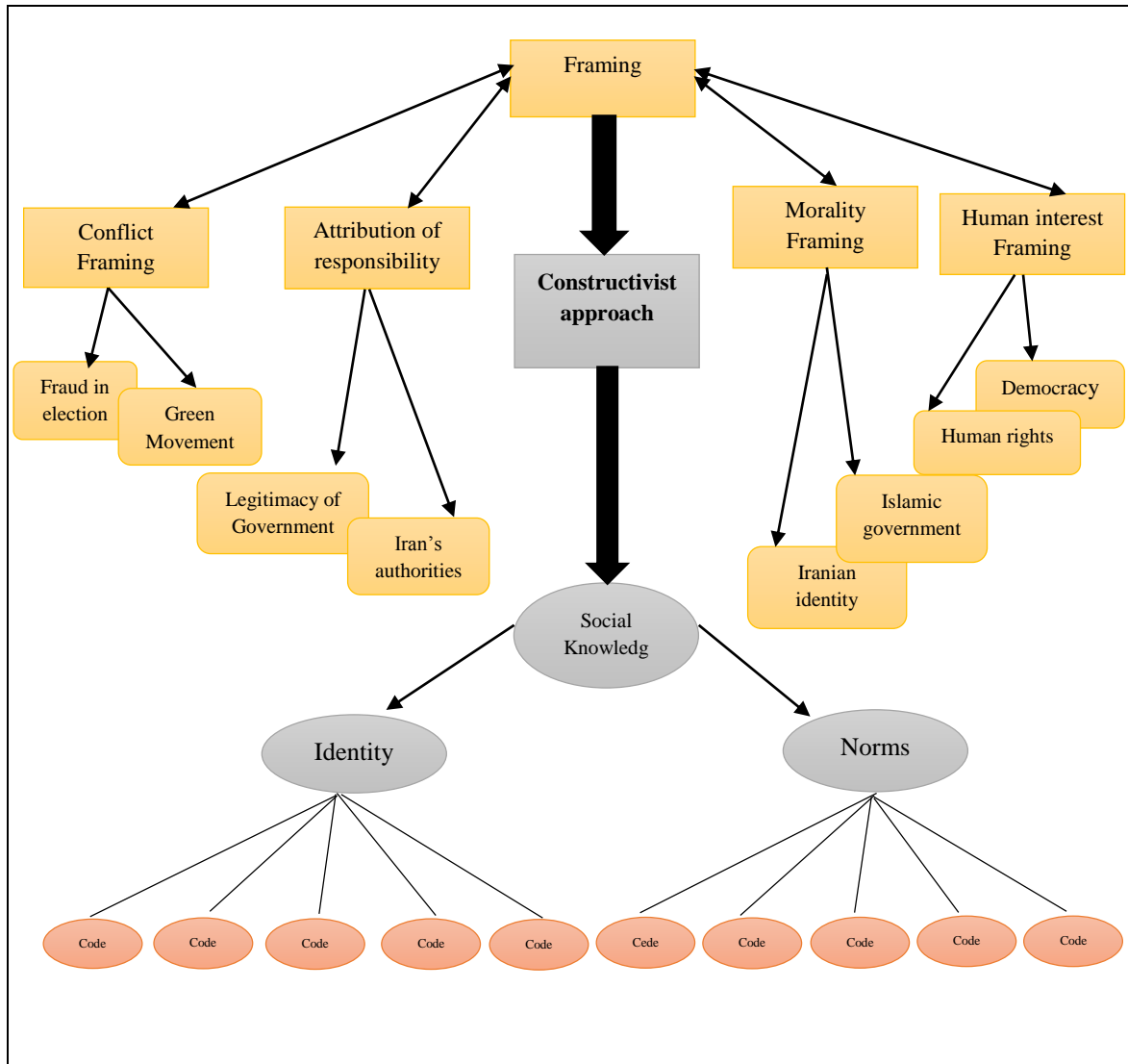
1. Fraud in election (Social knowledge and Norm)
2. Green Movement (Social knowledge and identity)
3. Democracy and structural problems (Social knowledge and Norms)
4. Human rights or freedom of speech (Social knowledge, Norms)

---

<sup>31</sup> . According to Annual Report on Human Rights 2008, United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Iran has highest rate of violation of human rights in the world. In this report the Britain has given favorable promise to Iran's human rights activists that along with EU partners, will monitor the human rights situation in Iran. The very impressive point in this report is emphasizing on forerunner 2009 presidential election in Iran. In this report, it was noted that "we will be closely monitoring developments in the presidential elections in June 2009, as we have concerns over how free or fair the electoral system really is." Therefore, setting up the BBCPTV, on 14 January 2009, a few months before the election was not too far-fetched.

5. Iranian religious or national identity (Social knowledge and identity)
6. Iran's authorities (Social knowledge and Identity)
7. Iran's Islamic system (Social knowledge and identity)
8. Legitimacy of government and executive branch (Social knowledge and Norms and Identity)

As it is shown in figure 3.3, data are totally categorized in process of framing and regarding constructivist approach, they are coded according to their relation with social identity and norms, while they are all considered as social knowledge that are shared with Iranian community by the BBCPTV.



**Figure 3.3: Coding process**

As a matter of fact, this categorization will be the ultimate goals of the present research to discuss and evaluation of research findings.

### 3.4.3 Data Recording / Instruments

Among the factors affecting quality, like research design and sampling, the evaluation instrument has a specific position in an academic research. Qualitative research tools

while enhances ability to play with the data, helps researcher to manage, shape and make sense of unstructured information. It will not do the thinking for the user but provides a sophisticated workspace that enables him/her to work through their information, classifying, sorting and arranging information to develop a meaningful conclusion. In this research besides preparing coding sheet and coding book and manually coding conducting, the author takes advantage of NVivo 8 software. Definitely, benefit from technology decrease the amount of likely errors while coding manually enable us to describe the items which need to be clarified.

It is quite remarkable that the codes are identified as “node” in this software and in this research the data are tagged with about 70 nodes. Also, there are some statistical information that are unattainable through manual coding.

#### **3.4.4 Data Analyzing**

The analysis of qualitative research involves aiming to uncover and / or understand the big picture by using the data to describe the phenomenon. Regarding Fairclough model of CDA as the research methodology, the coded data will be discussed by three levels: description, interpretation and explanation. Indeed, this trifocal discussion engages the author to analyzing the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions, step by step.

Therefore, the coded data, will be analysis in three stages. At first level as the text, focus on observable surface structures and linguistic characteristic form of collected data by describing the general situation. The coded data, in descriptive level, provide us to know who are protagonists and antagonists of the study according to the BBCPTV



introduction. Furthermore, the allegories, metaphors, idioms; proverbs that are representative of cultural roots, will be identified as well as pointing out the phrases and words with common historical contextual background. Also, passive and active form of language used will be considered as the determinant factor of news transparency. Refer to linguistic form, pave the way for moving from text to discourse.

At the second stage, as the social processes of producing, the text will be interpreted to find what does the text means that is representative of discourse practice. Also, considering the research questions' criteria and theoretical frameworks, the author will try to interpret and decode all important points that makes the research closer to the objectives of the study. And finally, third stage is not only interpretative, but also explanatory in purpose (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 1996, 2001).

It is noticeable that, before analyzing the data in each part, the general space of social and political condition will be describe to pave the way for critical analyzing and understandable discussion regarding the existence situations. Since the ultimate objective of any CDA study is to disengage the underlying hidden agenda which sustain tacit in discourse, general space description, aims to uncover in the next stage, how the BBCPTV in relation to context, portraits the Iran's political and social landscape to has the most effective impact on Iranian Green Movement.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter introduced, discussed and present the details of methodology, and coding schedule and process of analyzing the data based on CDA. Accordingly, through this method, the research is intended to map the main theme/subtheme and frame of the

news and programs, coated by the BBCPTV. Indeed, the coded data with different tags, accordance with the theoretical framework, considered as a guide in three levels of the CDA. It is noticeable that the coding will be done both manually and by using Nvivo software. Eventually, it is supposed to put the research on the right direction to unveil the hidden layer of BBCPTV's media policy and also achieving strong findings.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDING**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter an effort has made to analyze the BBCPTV coverage of Iranian Green Movement. Considering the research methodology, the collected data will be analyzed in order to answer the research questions and fulfilling the research objectives. The ultimate aim in this chapter is to take a kind of knowledge that was implicit in collecting data to translate them into understandable prose. To that end, the study holds on critical discourse analysis based on the BBCPTV's framing and its possible effects on construction of the Green Movement according to constructivist approach. It is obvious that the main axis of analysis is concentrated on two core aspects of constructivism: social identity and norms, while effecting on social knowledge is considered as a source of impact on Green Movement's social and collective identity and norms.

The analysis is designed in 10 sections and in three levels of CDA. Considering context and then description level with special attention to some variables and outlines, like metaphorical aspects, companionship and semantic conflicts, as well as pronouns, persons and personalities that show a specific ideological view of the text, help to have a reach finding in interpretation and explanation level. In interpretation level, regarding the BBCPTV attention on certain events (framing) which has been underlined during the analysis, the research will be focused on what the discourse is about and how the various statements work at the level of language.

Finally, in the light of overall arguments, and in explanation level, the role that the BBCPTV has played in construction of the Green Movement will be figured out. In this level, the empirical evidence and the general space of Iran on that special occasion must

be considered which goes beyond the textual materials. In other words, we need to know what the Iran's social realities are and then, how it is constructed by BBCPTV during the riots. Therefore, presenting the current context and general space, before considering the programs, help the author to realize what prompts the BBCPTV directors to make specific textual choices and conduct the dominant discourse.

## **4.2 Critical discourse Analysis of the BBCPTV Coverage and Practice of Constructivism**

In this section the BBCPTV's program will be critically analyzed in 10 categorizations. But before analysis of each section, the BBC focuses attention on some parts of the news/programs will be underlined to have a strong discussion in three level of analysis.

### **4.2.1 The Election Results**

Iran's 10<sup>th</sup> presidential election was held in high participation on 12 June 2009. The result of the election was announced by Iran's broadcasting on June 13. 2009 and accordingly, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the then fundamentalist president, won the election against three challengers, Mirhosein Mousavi<sup>32</sup> and Mehdi Karroubi<sup>33</sup>, the reformist candidates, and Mohsen Rezaee. Regarding the total number of votes cast for

---

<sup>32</sup> . Mir-Hossein Mousavi Khameneh is an Iranian reformist politician, artist and architect who served as the seventy-ninth and last Prime Minister of Iran from 1981 to 1989.

<sup>33</sup> . **Mehdi Karroubi** is an influential Iranian reformist politician, who is referred to as the iron "shaykh of reforms", democracy activist, mojtahed, and chairman of the National Trust Party. He was the chairman of the Parliament from 1989 to 1992 and 2000 to 2004, and a presidential candidate in the 2005 and 2009 presidential elections. He is a founding member and former chairman of the Association of Combatant party. Karroubi is a critic of the Guardian Council and Iran's Judicial System. By appointment of the Supreme Leader, he was a member of the Expediency Discernment Council and an adviser, posts he held until resigning from all his posts on 15 June 2005 after the first round of the 2005 presidential election. He has been described as a "moderate" with a "mostly rural" base of support. Karroubi considers himself a pragmatic reformist and now is one of the leaders of the Opposition movement in Iran.

each candidate, none of them had received popular support in their birthplace and Ahmadinejad came out on top, even in other candidate's hometowns.

For the first time in Iran's election's history, people were witness of four presidential candidate debate in live programs through Iran's national TV. It seems Iran's authorities bragged the freedom of speech and democracy in Iran, however, the results never met the point.

The most controversial TV debates occurred between Ahmadinejad and his serious competitor, Mirhosein Mousavi, accused Ahmadinejad of moving Iran toward "dictatorship." And at another point, charged incumbent president's foreign policy to suffer from "adventurism, illusionism, exhibitionism, extremism and superficiality." On the other hand, Ahmadinejad contended that the early founders of the Iranian revolution, including Moussavi and the previous president, "had gently moved away from the values of the revolution and will turn to a power that considered the country as his properties" (Shirazi, 2009). In fact, it was the first time after 1979 that Iranians were witness of the obvious conflict between Iran's officials, who have a central role in Iran's political system.

As a matter of fact, the debates on one hand, put the acceptability or somehow illegitimacy of Islamic government under the question and on the other hand caused a deep fracture within the Islamic Republic officials. Above all, it represented the pro and anti-government rallies as a tug of war between people and their hardline government and between conservative incumbent president Ahmadinejad and reformist challenger Mousavi, whose motivational messages, calling for political freedoms, was able to gain the support of Iran's youth. Evidently, the Green Movement was outcome of the "*moj-e-*

*sabz*” that also is known as the “green wave,” before the election. It was a campaign to support Mir Hossein Mousavi who entered in a serious competition against extremist incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Majd, 2010).

The Iran presidential election’s aftermath grabs all over the world political figures’ attentions; some express their concern about Iran’s situation, like the USA and Britain while some other sent a congratulation message to Ahmadinejad. Veritably, the news agencies and international journalists were a matter of great concern with Iran’s authorities due to coverage of protests, by details and fomenting the political unrests with internationalization of domestic news. As mentioned before the BBC Persian Service appearance was more prominent than the other worldwide news agencies. However the BBCPTV has coverage the whole aftermath of the election results, but 3 of them are selected by the author to discuss.

#### ➤ **Candidates Defeat in Their Hometown**

The BBCPTV’s newscaster starts with pointing out the results of the election for each candidate, separately, while highlights the defeat of candidates even in their hometown. He also comparing Iran’s election with developed country and called it “unnatural” and as a “rare case”:

- *The nomination of non-local candidates with majority of votes is described by an analysis in Paris “as a rare case.” Experts say that in developed countries the candidates for parliamentary and presidential elections in their birthplace, gain more votes compare to other candidates; although these votes are not decisive,*

*but show the natural tendency of people to their fellow townsfolk, the thing that seems to be otherwise in the recent presidential election in Iran.*

Also the presenter repeatedly reminds to previous presidential elections and exact number of candidates' votes in their hometown and compares with the current results.

On the other hand it refers to Iran's Interior Minister's quotation that rejects this rule:

- *"There is no justification that candidates win the majority of votes in their home."*

And then the attention attracted to candidates' protests to results with reference to Mousavi's press conference and his point of view:

- *Mir Hossein Mousavi, one of the most serious competitors of Mr. Ahmadinejad, in the morning of Saturday, on Khordad 23, hold a press conference to introduce himself as winner of the election and called the results just "jugglery of the election committee" and Iran's broadcasting (IRIB).*

➤ **Karroubi Calls the Results Surprising and Ridiculous**

The news coverage the candidates' protests by restatement of their remarks:

- *The presidential candidate, Mehdi Karroubi, issued a statement called the election results ridiculous and surprising and described the situation inextricable to the extent that words fail to express and needs to think over it.*

And in another sentence quoted his remark:

- *"I will not silence against unprofessional engineering of election."*

It is added that Mr.Mousavi described the results "shocking" and addressed the election as a "Great game."

- *Mr. Mousavi described the results "shocking" and added "the people seek to know how and by whom this "Great game" has been planned.*

Also the presenter mentions that Mousavi alleged "numerous and obvious violation in election" and that never surrender to this "dangerous scene" while he again emphasized on the secrets behind "dangerous scenario" and "jugglery of Iran's officials."

During an interview with the BBCPTV, Ali Abtahi, one of the opposites of government, describes the situation unbelievable and shocking for some Iran's high-ranking officials like Hashemi Rafsanjani, and stressed that the opposite's candidates asked for a meeting with Supreme Leader but nothing has happened so far. And in another sentence he alleges:

- *"Some ballot boxes were already filled."*

The news has a retrospect to before the Islamic revolution in 1979 by Karroubi and reminds the destiny of Seyyed Hassan Modarres who was critical of Reza Khan (the Shah of Iran), and finally was killed in prison. In addition refers to Imam Khomeini's Islamic system and called the current events as a "mourn" and "Funeral for Islamic Republic of Iran" since it should have been a great festival due to unprecedented participant of people.

In another quotation from Mousavi, it is mentioned that:

- *"Traitors to public votes are not afraid of the burning the Persian house."*



### ➤ **Mousavi Calls for Demonstration**

Two issues attract attention in this news. The first invitation of Mousavi to demonstrate with exact time and place. What is more important in this invitation is the place of demonstration that is from “Enghelab” (revolution) square to “Azadi” (freedom) square. The second issue in this news is Mousavi threatening the Iranian authority to sit in at the Shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini and emphasized again that they will go to the Jamaran, the house of Ayatollah Khomeini, if their entrance is prevented to his shrine.

- *Mr. Mousavi warned to sit in at the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini if the demonstration is prevented.*

It was the first announcement of Green Movement’s leaders that indicates the official existence of movement. On the other hand, Iran’s officials warn the people for any gathering and blame Mousavi’s campaign for any irresponsible stimulation.

The BBCPTV aired on behalf of anonymous fellow who is close to Mousavi to convey his message:

- *Mr. Mousavi in this message reported his family's health and said: “despite a lot of pressure from the authorities to accept fictitious election results, I went to the Ministry of Interior and request for the nullification of the election’s results to protect and retain people’s rights.”*

And at the end the presenter reads the Mousavi’s message, saying to his supporters, “be on stage”:

- *Mr. Mousavi at the end of the message asked people to avoid any conflicts and tensions while “never leave the scene.”*

#### 4.2.1.1 Description level of Analysis

In this level the raw data, within the text, are putting together to detect logical connection between different parts of the text as well as exploring semantic conflicts and metaphorical aspects. Indeed, manipulating of data to generate descriptive information will make them easy to understand and interpret. Therefore the following locutions are determined to be examined in descriptive level.

- **Jugglery of election committee, magic box, Iran's TV, unprofessional engineering of the election.**

At first the step the Iran's national TV and ballot box attributed to magic box due to taking out unexpected results by the election committee, while the early announcement of results is called as unprofessional engineering and dangerous arrangement of election.

- **Great festival, mourning, funeral ceremony**

The wide participation of Iranians in an election considered as a great festival which was turned into a mourning day and that is better to mourn instead of celebrating.

- **Candidates lost the votes in their home towns, ridiculous and surprising results, putting forward Hasan Modarres's election story, cheating, traitors to public votes, unreliable operators**

In this report, win the vote in birthplace of candidates is considered as usual and in retrospect to pervious election results and the amount of votes that candidates gain in their home town tried to approve fraud in the current election. On the other hand, comparing the current situation (Islamic rule) with before revolution era (imperial rule), and what happened to Hasan Modarres at that time, put the Islamism of system under question as well as suggests the unreliability and validity of results.

Seyyed Hassan Modarres was a cleric and a notable supporter of the Iranian “Constitutional Revolution.” Sayyed Modaress was openly critical of Reza Khan (the shah of Iran) rule and was placed under imprisonment in charge of criticisms. During the Iran’s seventh parliamentary election, Reza Khan with a clear intervention in the election removed him and his votes. He was finally killed in a prison in December 1937.

- **Great game, dangerous scenario, dangerous scene.**

Resembling the election and its aftermath to a great game and dangerous scenario that Iran’s authorities are the main actors of this game.

- **Numerous and obvious violations in election, the secrets behind the scene.**

The obvious violation in front of the secret behind the scene shows the imprudence of who is engaged and conduct the recent events.

- **Sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the rule of lies and tyranny in this system**

Bring the terms of “Islamic and sacred system” together with “the rule of lie” is an allusion or quibble of lack of legitimacy which shaking the pillars of the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran and reinforcement of lies and tyranny.

- **Sit in at the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini, “Jamaran”, protect and return people’s right.**

Appeal to Ayatollah Khomeini as founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran revealed deviance and getting away from Islamic values which the Islamic Republic was built on it by Ayatollah Khomeini. The “Jamaran” or “*Beyt-e-Imam*,” was the place that people get together to see him and listen to his advises. Now, the resort of opposite’s candidates to Jamaran and the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini for returning the violated rights shows

their adherence to values of the Islamic revolution against who trample these values.

- **Determining of demonstration itinerary from Enghelab Square to Azadi Square**

The word “Enghelab” in Farsi means revolution that is reminiscent of Islamic revolution in 1979. And “Azadi” means freedom that was the main slogan of Iran’s revolution and now they believe it is taken from the Iranians by authorities and getting away from this sacred goal. Conducting the protesters from Enghelab to Azadi could be reminiscent of the revolution’s goals and also promise of victory for the protesters.

- **Replacing land of Iran with Persian home**

The word “Persian” almost identify the reminiscent of Iran’s ancient and “Persian identity” of Iranians that is totally against “Islamic identity” and religious one.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

The BBCPTV tries to confirm fraud in election by referring to experts’ opinion about the results to show off abnormality of Iran’s election. Also, in these news, Iran’s election is compared with developed countries that candidates in the city of their birth gain more votes in comparison with other candidates and it shows the natural tendency of the people who follow their townsfolk. Obviously, in this part, it is attempted to inculcate rigging in election and or implies hypothetical scenarios. Using the words like “even” or “but” will challenge the audiences’ mind:

- *Even in the birthplace of the four presidential candidates, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad catches the majority. Or:*
- *A journalist in Paris told the BBC Persian service that one of the most important factors in triumph is a candidate’s regional dependence which makes people*

*show their interest to their candidates more than others. But in the tenth presidential elections, the country's official news agency reported, the situation is otherwise.*

- **Active and Passive verbs**

Most of the verbs are in passive forms and are indicative of the “mysterious hands behind the scene”, like:

- *“Mr. Abtahi said that some ballot boxes were already filled.”*
- *“People never comply with those who come to power by cheating.”*
- *“I will expose the secrets behind these dangerous scenarios.”*

- **Protagonists and antagonists**

In an overview, the news focus on violated rights of Iranian by Iran’s authorities and specifically Ahmadinejad and trying to return the violated rights by opposite’s candidates, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Karroubi. Therefore, Ahmadinejad is an antagonist and two opposite’s candidate playing protagonist’s role in this story.

#### **4.2.1.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The news belongs to 13-14 June, 2009. The source of news is both Iranian news agencies and included the BBCPTV’s interview with some Iran’s officials and relatives of opposite’s candidates. The media framing is fraud in the election as an anti-norm that has happened in Iran’s presidential election. In level of responsibility, the unusual results is signaled to actuate their audiences’ mind and draw attention to Iranian executives’ involvement in the engineering of the results. It has been tried to stimulate the ethical and religious dimensions of event by referring “burning Persian house” and

turning the great festival to “mourn” and shaking the pillars of “sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” The negative attitude is provoked by talking about prevention of “peaceful demonstration” by Iran’s officials and arresting the suspected people as well as emphasize on non-democratic structure of the system.

The Green movement is also identified by the BBCPTV in this news as a movement that seek for peace and justice which are deprived of freedom of speech. And in contrary, the Iran’s officials introduce it as an irresponsible group who their act is illegal.

Accusing the Iran’s authorities, who are the pretenders of Islam and Islamic state, to rigging and cheating the public, put the Islamic identity of the system at the risk. Above all, referring to Persian identity by Mousavi, the opposite’s candidate, not only remind the Iranian identity to Iranians, but also is the prelude of separation in the Islamic system. At first, the BBCPTV does its part best to bolds the fraud in the election, of course indirectly, with reporting the number of candidate’s votes in their birthplace and tries to show electoral victory of Ahmadinejad even in the other candidates’ home town as a surprising issue and very rare case, in comparing with international standard and even with pervious election results in Iran.

Gaining the majority of votes in birthplace considered as a fact by the BBCPTV on this news. According to the BBC, Iran’s failure to comply with this rule is strong evidence indicating a fraudulent act and shows a serious problem in Iran’s political system.

The obscure results of the election are provided by referring to the experts’ point of view about public natural tendency to vote to their local candidates. It is said that one of the most important factors in triumph is “regional dependence which makes people show their affiliation to their candidates.” The BBC experts described the nomination of

non-local candidates with majority of votes as a rare case which has happened in Iran.

Furthermore, the election results are called by opposites candidates “ridiculous and surprising” and accuse the officials to “unprofessional engineering” of election. Unprofessional and unskilled actions, referred to insignificant of public opinion in sight of Iran’s executives who have no fear of crossing constitutional boundaries.

Referring to foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a “scarified system”, which is engaged with lies and tyranny, suggests a serious contrast with Islamic criteria. During the news, repeatedly, Mousavi’s announcement is quoted that insist on gathering at the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, or his ‘*Beyt*’ (home), as a sign of protest to “obvious deception and violation” that “shack the pillars of the sacred system of Islamic Republic.”

Using the terms of “*Beyt-e-Rahbar*,” is remarkable here. It is the supreme leader’s location as a spiritual place which has a special holiness among his followers. The supreme leader preaching and advising them, issued “*Fatwa*” and defined his position on political and social issues. Resort to this house that its owner is not more alive to meet their demands, shows the opposite candidate’s respect to Ayatollah Khomeini and appeal to him from those who are apparently his followers but devastated people’s right. Another point in this report is a sharp contrast between the word “sacred” system and “deception.” In fact the sanctimony of Iran’s Islamic system that always has been bolded by the governors, has been suspected by what is called “obvious violation and deception.” No doubt, in this sacred system religious legitimacy has a special place. The word of “legitimacy” is one of those words that is in high consumption in Iran. In political science, legitimacy is the popular acceptance of an authority that has two

dimensions in Iran; religious and political legitimacy, through the concept of *veleyat-e-Faqih*. However the religious dimension overshadows the political aspect. The Iran's officials are warned by Mousavi that leaving Justice is the same "illegitimacy."

Emphasize on dangerous 'scenario', and "great game" indicate that the current situation and the election results are planned by the election committee, however "unprofessionally." Referring to already "filled up ballot boxes" by Mr.Abtahi, also suggests deceive of people.

It should be noted that Ali Abtahi served in different governmental centers like IRIB, Ministry of culture and Islamic Guidance, IRIB's representative in Lebanon. He was the government critics, who had resigned from his post three times as cabinet member in 2004 due to "differences in political viewpoints with the parliament's majority." Mohammad Ali Abtahi was arrested on June 16, 3 days after the interview with the BBCPTV, in the aftermath of the presidential elections and subsequent protests.

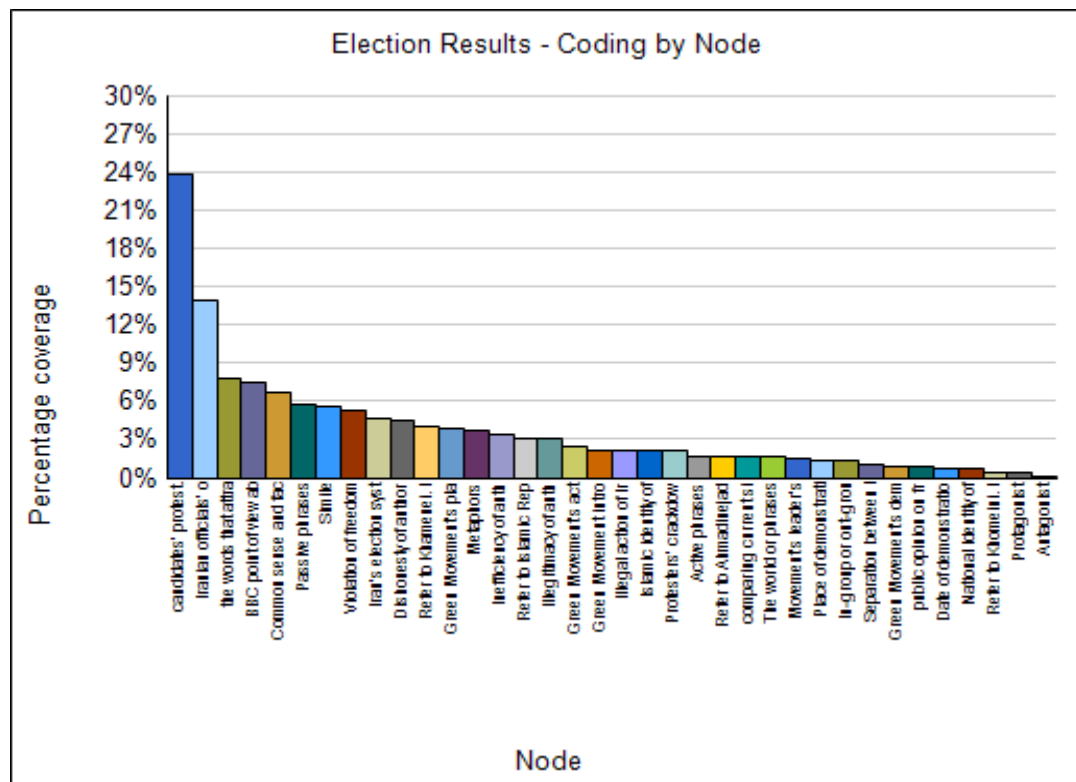
In this report Mr. Mousavi warns to expose "the secrets behind the scene." Unraveling the secrets of a system by one who is from within the system could put the legitimacy of the system in question; the legitimacy that is based on "Sharia" and "Islamic conception" which there is no room for lies and perfidy. It could stimulate the common sense of people who had believed the Islamic identity of Iran's government for more than 30 years.

The noticeable point is referring to the national identity of Iranian and naming Iran "House of Persian" by Mousavi that is an obvious retrospect to before the Islamic revolution:

- *Traitors to public votes are not afraid of the burning the Persian home.*



However, Iran is the legal name but Persia is an ancient kingdom within Iran when there was no track of Islamic identity and Islamic government. Actually, in the situation that Islamic identity is under question they talk about the national identity of Iranians. On the other hand, in this sentence the Iran's authorities considered as foreigners, not-Persian and traitors in Iran that are not concerned about Iran's destiny.



**Table 4.1: Election results**

The BBCPTV tries to have a professional look at the issue and use the experts' point of views like Ahmad Salamatian and Hossein Bastani who are analysts of Iran's issues but not with impartial comments. Furthermore, the BBCPTV showcase the violation of freedom of speech when report the situation of Mousavi and his prevention of

contacting with his fans. In another part, referring to non-admission of candidates by supreme leader for resolving the issue induce the irresponsibility of Iran's authorities and maybe suggest his involvement in the subject of disputed.

Regarding the coded data in table (4.1), in coverage news of the election results, the highest degree of attention is on controversy among the candidates and Iran's authorities. As it is shown in table (4.1) the defeated candidates protested to incredible results and Iran's electoral system defect, officials' illegitimacy and their dishonesty and inefficiency are coded as the prominent point which will be discussed later. Lack of freedom of speech and democracy on one hand and comparing the Islamic system with Iran's monarchy system, before 1979, besides cheating the people are controversial issues that are prominent in these news. There is also adequate information about the dissident candidates' announcement in order to their invitation for setting the protests and also about the date and location of demonstrations.

#### **4.2.1.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms**

In the complex political system of Iran, the presidential and parliamentary candidates have to be vetted before the election by the Guardian Council's clerics. Candidates' commitment to the principles of the Islamic Republic and to the principles of the Supreme Jurist (*Velayat-e Faqih*) are the important points that must be confirmed by Guardian Council. Among several hundred presidential and several thousand parliamentary nominees only a few are deemed qualified to stand for elections. For instance, in the 2009 presidential elections, among 476 nominees, only four were deemed to be qualified, including the incumbent president Ahmadinejad, former

Speaker of the Parliament Mehdi Karroubi, former Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi, and a former Revolutionary Guard Commander and secretary of the Expediency Council, Mohsen Rezaee.

Therefore it is obvious that the vetted candidates were affiliated with the Islamic revolution as a current political norm in Iran. On the other hand this Islamic revolution is identified with Islamic and religious identity that is founded on Islamic conceptions and teachings. But the reformist and defeated candidates, after the election not only asked for nullification of the result but also demand for separation of state from religious. Encouraging people to support the Green Movement, at first, needed to uphold the fraud in election and delegitimizing the Islamic identity of the system to legitimize the Green Movement's goals and construction of collective identity. The evaluation and interpretation of the BBCPTV coverage shows the companionship of this service with the Green leaders.

When this system is accused of fraud in the election and malpractice by its own body, it suggests fragility of the system, leading to a negative sensitivity of what the Islamic Revolution was based on it as a political and religious norm in Iran. While the authorities emphasize on the religious dimension of the system and the rule of Islam as propellant of the Iran's revolution, the fraud and deception of people in this system put the foundation and religious identity of the system under a big question. Moreover, they are accused to "unprofessional engineering" of the election.

In the last several years, the term of "election engineering" inserted in political games. The politicians who take part in electoral game, provide a platform for their favorite candidates to win the election. The most important indicator of electoral engineers is

dismissal and appointment of governmental executors based on election conductors' interests. For them, the end justifies the means. When the defeated candidates accuse the system to "unprofessional engineering", it confirms the depth separation between Iran's authorities besides "dishonesty" and "inefficiency" of Iran's officials who have no fear of barefaced fraud and engaging in a "great game." They are also addressed by Mousavi, as "the traitors who have no fear of burning "Persian home."

Religious thought and Islam were the most important elements in 1979 Islamic Republic of Iran. Actually, the revolution was a revitalization of religious identity against Persian and Iranian identity of Iran's nation in Pahlavi's dynasty. The term of "Persian home" for Iran and calling Iran as "land of Persia" was the first time after 30 years applied by one of the leaders of the revolution. Using "Persian home" instead of "Islamic territory" for Iran is somehow underestimating the Islamic dimension of Iran and Iranians. It could be considered as drawing Iranian's attention to their original and ancient identity that was "Persian" or "Iranian" not "Islamic."

As usual, putting forward a counter discourse in societies pave the way for the leaders to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and need. As we saw in the next stage, after bringing up the rigging in election, the leaders of Green Movement asked for the separation of religion and state that is totally disturbing the Iran's political norms. The BBCPTV, also, with underling the Mousavi's statement fomenting the divisions and tries to identify "we" against "them."

The BBCPTV, aware of all intricacy of Iran's political and religious system, attempts to bold disputes among Iran's officials at the first stage and then put forward the "fraud" in the election as an incontrovertible fact, and as an obscene case in Islam, not only

tarnished the face of Islam but also suggests dishonesty of officials with Iran's nations. Iran's authorities as the Islam pretenders are introduced as the traitors to people's rights, fraudulent, violators of human rights and freedom of expression and ungodly persons who do whatever to keep their sovereignty. Even by comparing the current election results with a parliamentary election in Reza Khan, the opinionated Shah of Iran, seeks to show the condition worse than before the revolution. Indeed, aftermath of the election, brought Iran in a serious challenge of legitimacy and governing capacity, both in interior and exterior relations.

#### **4.2.2 Ayatollah Khamenei's Friday prayer speech**

Thousands of demonstrators faced a violent response when they took to the streets to protest against the announcement of the victory of incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Friday's presidential elections. It was inauguration of clash between anti-riot police and the protestors. According to Amnesty International reports the plain-clothes security forces unnecessarily used batons to beat and scatter non-violent individuals, injuring many people. Also, this organization while express its anxiety about Iran's human rights condition, asked for urgent investigation and summoned those who are responsible for the violation of human rights and freedom of expression.

At least 170 people were arrested during the first days of clashes between security forces and hundreds of demonstrators around the Ministry of the Interior and other areas in central Tehran. Those arrested included leading political figures were accused by the authorities to orchestrate the unrest.

Also the universities have been closed and some 100 riot police, wearing helmets and shields, had chased some 300-400 students on grounds belonging to the University of Tehran. Security personnel also used pepper and tear gas to quell the unrest. In another incident, police on motorcycles beat supporters of presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, who had staged a sit-in in Tehran to protest the results of the elections.

On the other hand, in the course of the unrest access to YouTube, Facebook and other social networking internet sites was blocked, as was access to a range of online news services. SMS communications were reported to be restricted. Many of these outlets carried reports which raised concerns that the conduct of the election was flawed and results had been rigged.

Ahmadinejad on Jun 14, in his first speech after the election called the dissident “dirt and dust” that underlie the fierce anger of protestors and brought a sharp reaction from the Iranians. On the other hand the opposites’ candidates along with their supporters encourage people “never leave the scene.” Here is what the BBCPTV reports in related to Iran’ Friday ceremony after the election.

#### ➤ **Ayatollah Khamenei Warns of Street Protests**

The news covers the Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei’s speech on Friday prayer ceremony that somehow determine his position against the aftermath of the presidential election. Although the news is supposed to deliver Ayatollah Khamenei’s remarks, but the BBCPTV tries to provide the audiences with additional details and reports.

For instance, absent of opposite candidates in ceremony, is taken as explicit dissident with Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei:

- *Iran's TV released the images of the President, the Speaker of Parliament and the head of the judiciary and Mohsen Rezaee, one of the presidential candidates, in a queue of prayers, but it doesn't seem that Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, took part in this ceremony.*

It also refers to participants and that they took part in a ceremony not by themselves, but also by encouraging and IRIB's incantation:

- *The day before the Friday Prayers, Iranian state media/IRIB broadcast special programs to encourage people to express loyalty to the Islamic Republic and its leaders in attendance at this ceremony and as reported by correspondents there were buses, carrying worshipers from all over the country to participate at the ceremony in Tehran.*

During this ceremony, the supreme leader, thanks all the people who participated in the election, and asks them to accept the results or follow their complaint through Guardian Council<sup>34</sup> and according to BBCPTV, he condemns and warns street demonstrations. What is more noticeable in this ceremony was Ayatollah Khamenei's utterances about the foreign media like the BBCPTV:

- *Ayatollah Khamenei said that the competition between the four candidates in this election, was been the competition between the Islamic Republic loyalists and foreign media, including the BBC and Voice of America trying to attribute the competition between supporters and opponents of the system.*

---

<sup>34</sup> . Iranian governmental *council* empowered to vet legislation and oversee elections.

Also in this report the BBCPTV emphasizes on inter-group conflicts among Iran's officials, who are the famous leaders of the Islamic revolution of Iran. Actually, it is tried to attract the attentions to some parts of speech that shows the depth of disagreements among the authorities while point to this part of leader's remarks:

- *This system is one of the healthiest political in the world and shouldn't accuse it of corruption, according to the report of foreign news agencies.*

And then immediately after this part, the presenter brings up the International reports on Iran's financial corruption:

- *During the election campaign, it was announced that, based on the assessment of international organizations, since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad tenure of 4 years, Iran's ranking in world corruption getting worse.*

Many students who protest to the election results, were beaten and arrested outside the main gate of the University of Tehran. The assailants were equipped with riot gear including shields and batons. Ayatollah Khamenei refers to this event and express that this situation is a good opportunity for terrorists to do such savage actions. But the BBCPTV while explaining the situation, condemns Basij, and plainclothes to involve in beating and killing the students:

- *While according to some sources the members of the Basij and plainclothes, targeting students, depend to governmental organizations, Ayatollah Khamenei said that those who attacked student dormitories and target faithful students and Hezbollah while they were chanting slogans in support of the leadership. Ayatollah Khamenei rejected the relation with who invade to university.*



Ayatollah Khamenei, also expresses dissatisfaction about the western leaders' speech in support of human rights in Iran and criticizes their policies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Israel and calls the Islamic Republic of Iran as forerunner of human rights in the world.

But here the BBCPTV adds some details to this part:

- *Some observers said that while the Islamic Republic hoped to rely on wide participation in the elections to provide the stronger position in the international scene, the created doubts about the outcome of the election could undermine the government's international position.*

At the end of the report, the presenter completes his sentence with stress on the uncertain status after the Supreme Leader's speech:

- *Still, opponents of presidential election results have not reacted to Ayatollah Khamenei's speech, and it is unclear whether this will change the way security forces treatment with opponents.*

➤ **Amnesty International: The Leader Remarks, Green Light for Suppression**

It conveys the Amnesty International reports and criticism of Iran's leader's remarks:

- *Amnesty International found Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statements on Friday Prayers, as a sign of readiness of Iranian officials to the violent crackdown of protesters; this international organization announced in a statement that such approach lead to death of people if they continue to protest.*

The supreme leader's speech interpreted as showing the "Green Light" to security forces for a violent crackdown of protestors, "who have not any choice to express their

opinions but, demonstration.” In addition, in this report, Amnesty International stresses that:

- *Since the head of state convicts the protestors for peaceful demonstrations instead of security guards, it has no means, but “dereliction of duty and abuse of power.*

At the end of the news, it is reminded that Iran is a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and according to the Convention, peaceful gathering declared as an inalienable right of people. Actually with these statements inform the Iranian about their rights and illegal action of Iran’s authorities by preventing the peaceful gathering.

According to this news, Ayatollah Khamenei, previously, asked the people to stop street protests and rallies, otherwise; “commanders behind the scene” will be responsible for the consequences. He had added:

- *“It is totally wrong idea if somebody thinks that street demonstrations are kind of leverage on Iran’s authorities.”*

#### **4.2.2.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **Iran broadcasting encourages people to take part in Friday Prayer, express their loyalty to Islamic Republic and Leader, the buses carrying the worshiper from all over the country.**

Encouraging people with special program coupled with the free buses that carrying prayers to Tehran University as a persuasion factor for joining the prayers, is in contrast with showing loyalty to the Islamic system. Actually, there is a hidden irony between

fidelity and persuading the faithful follower to participate in a supportive gathering with free buses or some other encouraging ways.

- **Ayatollah Khamenei warns of street protests, condemned street protests, confirmed the election results before legal procedures.**

Early confirming the results and asking to accept it and condemning street protests by supreme leaders, somehow suggest the spirit dictatorship and entity's power of the supreme leader. Furthermore, it could confirm the “unprofessional election engineering” that the opposite candidates’ claims.

- **Iran leader’s remark, green light for suppression, Amnesty International report**

Interpreting and considering the supreme leader’s words as a “green light” by the BBCPTV, is the metaphor of giving permission to the violent crackdown of protestors by security forces. Referring this report to Amnesty International pay to a horrible aspect of the issue that is violation of human rights. This non-governmental organization works to mobilize public opinion to put the presser on government that let abuse take place.

- **Violent crackdown, peaceful demonstration, express opinion**

Using these words together attract attention to suffocation situation and suggesting lack of freedom of speech and expression and consequently lack of democracy in Iran’s Islamic government.

- **Commanders behind the scene, political leaders**

It is repeated by the BBCPTV quoted by the leaders that has been the tacit referral of opposite candidates who will be accused for any possible tragic consequence.

- **Comparing Iran's election in 1979 with Iran's election in 2009, political earthquake for enemies, celebration for the friends of Islamic Republic, sign of public interest to the Islamic Republic, trust in the political system,**

The wide participation in the 2009 election is compared with a 1979 referendum by the supreme leader. The 1979 referendum was on creating an Islamic Republic that was approved by 99% of voters; although it was boycotted by some group. Now, the wide participation in an election considered as a renewed support of the Islamic Republic and trust in the political system by Iranians; although the enemies of Islamic system attempt to put the legitimacy of the system in under the question.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

At the first part of the news the BBCPTV attracts attention to unequivocal separation and division among Iran's officials to emphasize on absence of opposite candidates in ceremony as their religious duty. The news anchor reports the Friday ceremony with this phrase:

- *Iran's TV released the images of the President, the Speaker of Parliament and the head of the judiciary and Mohsen Rezae, one of the presidential candidates, in a queue of prayers, but it doesn't seem that Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, took part in this ceremony.*

Emphasizing on the Leader's point of view as the first and last sentence and despite the other candidates' opinion and ambiguous results, call its landslide victory for Ahmadinejad.

- *Ayatollah Khamenei shortly after the announcement of primary election results and before the normal and legal procedures confirmed the results that showed a*

*landslide victory for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; while the other candidates accused the government of electoral fraud.*

And then refers to Ayatollah Khamenei's undisputed support of Ahmadinejad and his sharp contrast with some high ranking officials those who were the founders of Islamic revolution:

- *The Leader of Islamic Republic talked about the closeness of Ahmadinejad's opinion with his thoughts.*

This channel also brings the international reports to reject the leader's claims based on addressing Islamic system as one of healthiest political system in the world:

- *During the election campaign, it was announced that, based on the assessment of international organizations, since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad tenure of 4 years, Iran's ranking in world corruption getting worse.*

And when he rejects the relation with whom attacked the dormitory during the street riots, this channel emphasize on plainclothes relevance with the supreme leader:

- *While according to some sources the members of the Basij and plainclothes, who targeting students, depend to governmental organizations, Ayatollah Khamenei rejected the relation with who invade to university.*

- **Active and passive verbs**

Most of the sentences are in passive forms that shows an ambiguous in BBCPTV's reports. The verbs like:

- *It was announced by the international organization, Iran's ranking in world corruption getting worse.*

- *It is said that the members of the Basij and plainclothes, who targeting students, depend on governmental organizations, according to some sources.*

However, Ayatollah Khamenei's words were mostly inactive form and too obvious.

- **Protagonist and Antagonist**

The antagonist of this news is Ayatollah Khamenei, who is shown as a dictator who ultimatums the opposites to obedient the election results and warns about the consequence of their opposite treatments.

#### **4.2.2.2 Interpretation Level of Analysis**

The news is related to Ayatollah Khamenei's speech on 19 June, 2009, coupled with the report of Amnesty International on the same day. The theme/subtheme of news are fraud in the election and Green Movement, the Islamic identity of government and more important one, violation of human rights and freedom of speech. The source of news is the BBC News

However the BBCPTV covers the leader's speech, but focuses on fraud in the election is the main framing. While his speech considered as a "warning" statement for protestors to election, the nature of the dictatorship of the Islamic Republic is bolded in these reports. Furthermore, injustice and illegal actions and corruption of the system provokes the negative attitude toward the religion and the Islamic system. At the level of responsibility for the current conflict, Iran's authorities and its executives are the main culprit for all the misdeeds. The identification of Iran's authorities as "them" against the protestors to election results as "we" is a very important point that the BBCPTV afford to chase in its reporting.

The news starts with the word of “Warning” that has a negative connotation for the audience. Although all the prayer preachers are appointed by the leader, but the presence of Ayatollah Khamenei at this ceremony is significant by itself for Iranians to realize the hypersensitivity of the situation. On the other hand, when the leader issues a face-to-face warning about a crisis of the day, it attracts the public opinion, both inside and outside the country.

Since the presence of people in this ceremony was noticeable, in the beginning part of the news, the BBCPTV focus the audience’s attention on the manner that the citizenship had been gathered at this event. It concentrates on Iran broadcasting to shape the addressers mind through special programs, encourage people to take part in this important ritual-political ceremony to show their faithfulness to the Islamic revolution system and its leader. On the other hand the government provides the loyal of the system with free buses to gather them from around the country. Actually, the BBCPTV induce viewers the mass gathered at the university didn’t come with their feet and had been motivated by various factors.

In the second part, before addressing the Ayatollah Khamenei’s words, describes the arrangement and rows of worshipers and reporting who is present and who is absent. It seems that the BBCPTV interprets the absence of opposite candidates as a gap among Iran’s officials. Although that is not far from reality while all the officials usually participate in this event, the absence of opposite candidates considered as an expression of their objection. Also, this channel report the Karoubi’s fans’ plan for marching toward the Tehran University which was cancelled due to unknown reasons.

A reporting opposites' plan which is cancelled for "unknown" reasons, exactly after the reporting the absence of opposite candidates confirm again their seriousness in continuing the protests. On the other hand, marching toward Tehran University and place of the ceremony show their strong opposite position against who were brought to shows their loyalty to the Islamic Republic.

Although holding a Friday ceremony by the leader of a country insignia on the Islamic identity of a government, emphasize on leader's inaugural address with the interpretation of a Surah from Quran about the peace of God for the believers in disturbed situations, actually concentrate on the role of religious concepts in both ruling and Iranian credence. But in second part these religious beliefs have been challenged by the reports of international organization about Iran's world ranking in financial corruption during the 4 years of Ahmadinejad's presidency.

The BBCPTV tries to complete this puzzle with refers to Ayatollah Khamenei's support of Ahmadinejad. It is reported by this channel that "Ayatollah Khamenei shortly after the announcement of primary election results and before the normal and legal procedures confirmed the results that showed a landslide victory for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; while the other candidates accused the government to electoral fraud."

Indictment of rigging in election plus 4 year-financial corruption of the incumbent president and more important, Ayatollah Khamenei's strong support of Ahmadinejad and talked about the closeness of their opinion with each other, practically undermine the Islamic nature and religious accuracy of the system as well as political legitimacy.

Destruction of Islamic and political face of the system is completed when the BBCPTV report the Amnesty International's viewpoint about Ayatollah Khamenei's remarks.



According to Amnesty International, the supreme leader's words was as a "green light" for violent crackdown on protestors, who have not any choice but peaceful demonstrations. The combination of "violent crackdown" and "peaceful demonstration" represent the pinnacle of cruelty of a system. Neither in politics nor in religion, there is no justifying for violence and repression. In Islam the believers are invited to compromise with their enemies. In politics also there is no room for repression and it is a typical feature of dictatorship and totalitarian states. But what is prominent in this report is Iran's violation of human rights that has been repeatedly criticized by both Iranians and international human right activists and NGOs. This report once again attracts attention to next potential infraction after the supreme leader's speech. Actually, accordingly, Ayatollah Khamenei, decisively, banned any kind of protest and gave law enforcement and paramilitary forces a "green light" to respond with force.

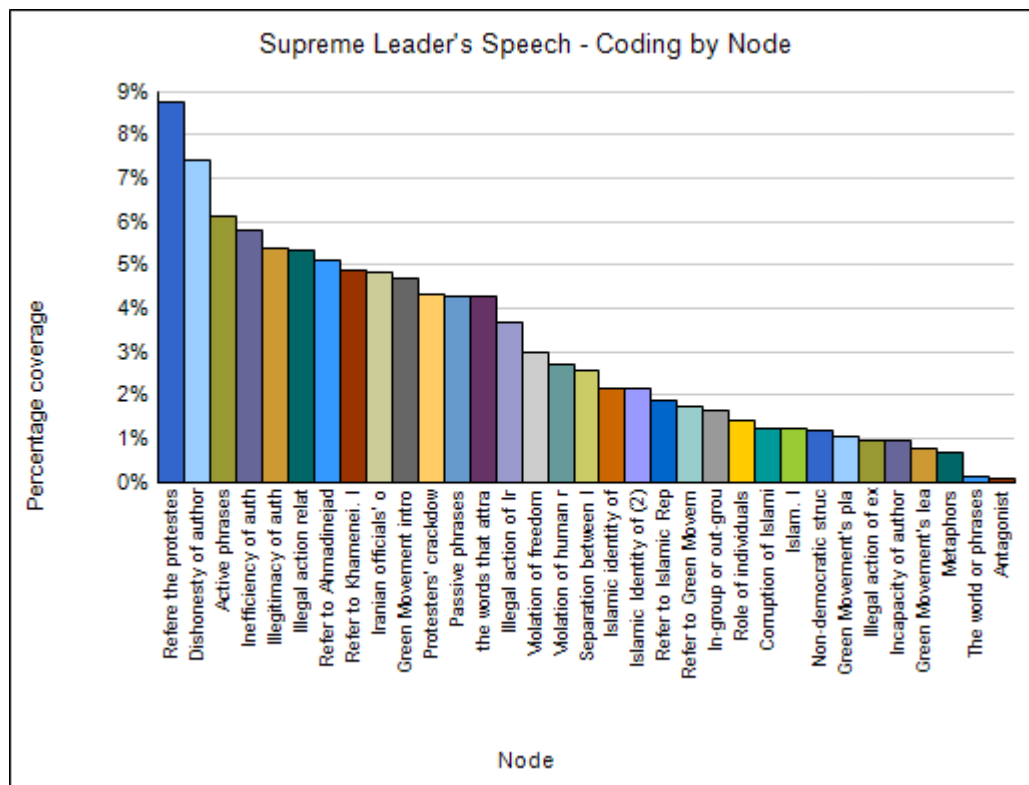
Furthermore, besides introducing Iran's government as violations of human rights, considered Iran as violations of international treaties. According to Amnesty International statement, Iran is a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and according to the Convention, peaceful gathering declared as an inalienable right of people.

Informing Iranians about their civil and political rights could be considered as encouraging them to insist on their constitutionally recognized rights such a peaceful assertion of political demands; otherwise, it is against what the Iran's officials signed, as an international covenant.

Also, violation of human rights and killing defenseless people, based on this report, is interpreted as dereliction of duty and abuse of power by Iran's authorities.

Ayatollah Khamenei in his speech reminded the prayers that “it is a wrong impression that street presence would be a level of pressure against the system and the Iran’s official never care about it.” Referring to this sentence, again and again, suggests the spirit of dictatorship that is against the republican and the Islamic system. Besides, emphasize on rejecting the responsibility for the bloodshed and violence, raising out of street protests by a leader shows the incompetence and incapacity of a system.

In coverage the news related to Supreme leader’s speech, as it is shown in table (4.2), the most percentage of coded data belong to the protests after the election while dishonesty, inefficiency and illegitimacy of authorities. Furthermore, what attracts the attention is the separation between Iran’s officials and discrimination of in-group and out-group by the BBC reports of Friday prayer.



**Table 4.2: Supreme leader’s speech**

When the BBCPTV incorporates the Amnesty International in its report, it suggests some illegal action or violation of human rights and freedom of speech, which are coded by about 3% of coding. None democratic structure and Islamic Identity of Iran beside corruption in system are shown as the coded data.

#### **4.2.2.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms**

Friday Prayer after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 turns to a religious/political ceremony in Iran. In Tehran, the Friday prayer ceremony is held at the University of Tehran, every week. Many of the young revolutionaries were in fact university students and it was a way to show the unity between religious clergy and students of the modern studies after the Islamic revolution. On the other hand, the victory of the Islamic Republic is indebted to greater participation of university students. Therefore Friday congregation is the most important religious-political gathering after the Islamic revolution that the masses of people from all different walk of life get together every Friday. The speakers by bringing up the latest religious and political issues not only causes the awareness of the people on political/social issues and constantly keeps the revolutionary morale alive in them. Actually, he doesn't allow the people that are the principles of revolution to go away from the scene and become indifferent towards the daily issues. The Friday prayers' Imams are appointed by the supreme leader's office that contains temporary or permanent ones. Ayatollah Khamenei leads the prayers only in sensitive situation when the supreme leader attends the ceremony, it shows the sensitive and specific status.

Every week, the leading streets in place of ceremony is cleared and the players provided by free buses to gather at the main campus. This has been as usual since the Islamic

revolution and is not limited to special circumstance, but what the BBCPTV has bolded in this news is gathering people from around the country and displaying the massive of loyalties to Ayatollah Khamenei and Islamic system.

Evidently, the report is not coverage of the whole sermon of Ayatollah Khamenei and some parts of his speech were selected by the BBCPTV. The selected parts at first, focuses on the deep divisions among the authorities and identification and inducing of in-group and out-group. Exposition of Ayatollah Khamenei's full support of Ahmadinejad, who is accused of financial corruption while he states his dissensions with some key bodies like Ayatollah Rafsanjani, who was one of the pillars of the Islamic revolution, and other famous figures, draw audiences' attention to this separation. Indeed, since Ayatollah Khamenei violated the neutrality, whether intentional or unintentional, lost his ability to manage the political and ideological crack in bones of governances and also between government and the people. No doubt, it resulted in the failure of the Iran's governors to discern friends from foes and challenged the next governmental important functions.

Incapacity and inability of the system to solve the current problems is outstanding while attract attention to the supreme leader's quotation about the role of foreign foes and their media's in recent unrests. Conducting a crisis from outside the countries and making a hypothetical enemy means shirk from responsibilities and corroborated absence of genuine accountability of Iran's authorities and on top of them Ayatollah Khamenei. It is notable that he refers to the British government as the most evil and the crowd confirm him by chanting "death to Britain."

Furthermore, the BBCPTV has underlined and identified the dictatorship aspect of leadership in Iran while pointing out the supreme leader's insist on accuracy of the election and warning demonstrators and the "commanders behind the door", to accept the results as his last word. This word in nothing but displaying the leader's extra-constitutional authority. Also, threatening the protesters by him about their behavior's consequences was another point that is highlighted in this news. Ayatollah Khamenei ultimatum the opposites any bloodshed or conflicts would be their own fault. This sentences interpreted by the BBCPTV and Amnesty International as a "green light" and prerogative of the religious leader to justify possible onslaught on the populace and gave a go ahead to the crackdown.

Moreover, the BBCPTV while supporting the peaceful demonstration as an inalienable right of protestors, giving permission to attack people by the supreme leader, considered as the Ayatollah Khamenei's dereliction of duty and abusing of the power. The induction of such abnormalities and identification of Islamic system as a dictatorship system legitimize what the Green leaders demanded as a new norms.

#### **4.2.3 Death of Neda Agha-Solta**

Ayatollah Khamenei's speech, not only was not the end of the story but also due to his position toward Ahmadinejad, who called the protestors "dirt and dust", provoked the opposites' anger. They came to street in defiance of warnings issued on Friday by the supreme leader, stronger than before. IRIB, the Iran's governmental TV reported the arrest of 457 persons by police and at least death in 10 and more than 100 injured during street riots on Saturday.

Among those were killed in the street, the bloody video circulated in Iran and around the world. It belonged to Neda Agha-Soltan, a young girl who was shot to death and her last moment captured by a cell phone and posted online. Within hours, she had become symbolic of victims of the Iran's government cruelty. According to her relative "she was not political and never took part in the election. She was not pro-Mousavi, not on Ahmadinejad's side." It was the first time that the name of "*Basij*" was heard clearly as the agent of murder. Eyewitnesses and her teacher, who was with her at that time, said Neda was shot by a pro-government *Basij* sniper. However, he was arrested by the people and his identity was exposed.

For the government, it was prologue of a new chaos, thus, banned her family to hold a funeral. And Iranian media tried to describe it as a fabricated video and then announced that the bullet that killed her never used by Iran's security force. And at the end Iran's executors accused CIA and opposites groups to involve in her murder. The Iran's ambassador told in his press interview that "they has chosen a woman, because the death of a woman draw more sympathy."

To illustrate the issue some important news are selected as follow:

➤ **Neda Calls for Freedom, the Freedom for All**

There is a short interview with one of the relative of Neda, who was killed by a bullet to her heart during the clashes in Tehran. The BBCPTV addresses the young girl as the symbol of those who were killed in Iran's unrests. In this report Mr. Makan, Neda's Friend is asked to explain what happened on that day. Although the BBCPTV calls Neda as a symbol of the Iranian protests, but he tell them that she was not Mousavi's fan

or any other party and on that day she was just passing through. He adds she called for freedom and her goal was her country. He emphasizes on her death by the Basij forces:

- *According to the images that people have sent, plainclothes and Basiji forces shot her in the heart.*

He also informs about the governmental statement, has been issued by Iran's authorities that makes hospitals, clinics and surgeons were obliged not to issue a death certificate by gunshot. He interprets this behavior as follows:

- *No doubt it is to prevent possible complain by their family to international communities. However, I have not yet seen Neda's death certificate, but I will take from her father.*

On the other hand, he is asked to explain about her funeral and the obstacle which Iran's executive made for her family and he explains:

- *The Basij forces and the mosque authorities didn't allow us to hold a ceremony, because they believed it was led to more chaos and conflicts. Actually, they knew she has been victimized and she was innocent and this raised deep sorrow to all people around the world.*

At the end the presenter mentions that the BBC service tried to talk with Neda's family, but they are not able to interview "due to secret reasons that couldn't explain."

#### ➤ **Doctor Hejazi Tell the Story of Neda**

Since the death of Neda is the main objective of the news, the BBC had arranged an interview with the doctor who made a great effort to save Neda Agha Soltan's life in her last moments to reveal the details of her death. Although the BBCPTV emphasizes that

he is not sure to be able to return to Iran, after talking with the BBC, but his motivation is mentioned in this sentence:

- *Arash Hejazi, told "I am putting myself at risk just for to innocent eyes of Neda. She died for "primary rights", I do not want her blood to be trampled."*

Based on his words, the people had arrested the shooter, who has not denied:

- *People screamed we catch him, catch him; and disarmed him and his identification card indicating that he is a member of the Basij. The people were very angry, and he cried: I did not want to kill her. People did not know what to do and let him go, but took his ID card.*

What is more highlighted in this news is putting the *Basij* and armed force, as a governmental forces, against protesters and stresses much emphasize on intense clashes them and frightened people.

### ➤ **Karroubi Meet Agha Soltan Family, Neda's Death Turn to Historical Outline**

This news report the Green movement's leader, Mehdi Karroubi's meeting with the family of those were killed during the riots. It is emphasized that they insist on fraud in the election and now in a meeting with Neda's family, he says that *"I will keep the movement alive and thriving."*

Mr. Karroubi according to this news has also mentioned:

- *Death of Neda screamed innocent of oppressed Iranian people in this situation and also prevent the violation of people rights and Enshaallah has a lucrative effect in the present and future. He also added: "The death of Neda is of those*



*events that will remain in the public memory for years and even centuries. She attached to the history and Iranian's movement."*

This news underlines the Neda's mother's expression and her annoyance of Iran's officials due to their remarks about the death of her daughter:

- *She pointed out to statements of the Khatib of Friday prayer, Ahmad Khatami and Zarghami head of IRIB, which introduced Neda as an actor and the other one alleged that the her death-scene is fake and made by computer; these comments are more painful and annoyed us more than her death.*

Moreover, in spite of previous mentions based on Neda's belonging to any party, her mother stresses that *"Neda, like thousands of other young people who are interested in their country's fate; object to the election results."* Furthermore, the news restatements her sister's quotations that rejects the government claims which was broadcast on national media. The IRIB blamed the *"Monafeghin's party"* for the death of Neda while it is repeatedly announcing that she is killed by the *Basij* forces.

The news is ended with the announcement of the date of Neda's funeral for fortieth day. Also, it is mentions that many of opponents are preparing to participate at this ceremony.

#### **4.2.3.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **Neda, freedom, symbol of movement**

Neda in Farsi means "voice." Combining "Neda" and "freedom" as the headline is, means who is voice of freedom that turn to symbolic of movement. It is said that Neda asked for freedom, freedom for all.

- **Beheshte-Zahra cemesstery, determination of a place for deceased**

Determination of a place for the killed people has a very disastrous connotation. On one hand it means that the killing of protestors will be continued and on the other hand is reminiscent of 1988 Iran' execution for the Iranian that shows the brutality of the Islamic revolution's authorities.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

The BBCPTV introduce *Basij* and plainclothes the killer of Neda, undoubtedly. It is repeatedly heard by the presenter and the interviewers that governmental forces and the *Basij* are responsible for her murder or even in the prevention of her relative to holding a funeral.

- *According to the images that people have sent, plain clothes and Basiji forces shot her in the heart*
- *Basij forces and the mosque authorities didn't allow us to hold a ceremony.*
- *The killer was not arrested, but some of those present at the scene suspected to a "plain clothes" or a Basiji one.*
- *Some of those present at the scene for a short while surrounded the person who seemed to shoot and didn't deny.*
- *People screamed we catch him, catch him; and disarmed him and his identification card indicating that he is a member of the Basij.*

*Emphasizing on violation of freedom of speech and human rights in Iran with referring to the sentences like:*

- *Neda Agha Soltan's family was not able to interview due to secret reasons. They did not explain the reasons.*

- *Mr. Hijazi added (after the interview) he does not think be able to return Iran*
- *Iranian authorities have issued various statements and make hospitals, clinics and surgeons oblige not to issue a death certificate by gunshot.*

- **Passive and Active verbs**

Most of the sentence are expressed in active forms.

- *Plainclothes and Basiji forces shot her in the heart.*
- *Basij forces and the mosque authorities didn't allow us to hold a ceremony, because they believe in it led to more chaos and conflicts.*
- *Iranian authorities have issued various statements and make hospitals, clinics and surgeons oblige not to issue a death certificate by gunshot.*
- *Hajar Rostami Motlagh, Neda's mother, expressed her complain of the preacher of Tehran, Ahmad Khatami and Zarghami head of IRIB which introduced Neda as an actor.*

- **Antagonists and protagonists**

The antagonists of the story are the governmental force and specifically *Basij* and plain clothes. And the protagonist of the story is indeed Neda who is introduced as a hero and that her death is a turning point in Iran's history.

#### **4.2.3.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The news coverage the death of Neda Agha-Soltan, 22-28<sup>th</sup> June, 2009. The source of news is the BBC and Iranian news agencies. The theme/subtheme is fraud in the election and the Green Movement, Islamic government and its legitimacy, while

violation of human rights and freedom of speech are bolded. Religious identity of Iranian is also highlighted in these news.

Neda was a young girl who was shot through her heart and died in front of camera with open eyes. Reporting such a news in details bring the emotional angle of events while introducing the perpetrators of the crime.

The framing is based on Green movement's activities and killing innocent protestors to election results by governmental forces and *Basij*. In this frame Green movement is introduced by the BBCPTV as a group who just asking for freedom of speech and their primary rights that is equal to their death. The Islamic government is introduced as the main charge for the events and displaying the brutal actions by the Islamic system and religious identity creates a negative propensity in their audiences toward Islam.

During the news it has been repeatedly referred to the Neda as a young girl and mentioned her age as well as describing her innocent eyes to provoke peoples' emotions and describes death of Neda as screaming of innocent and oppressed Iranian people. All statements are set to put the oppressed against oppressors or in other words, Iran's people against their governors, who are responsible for killing the oppressed and innocents people.

A contradictory subject in this story is that the BBCPTV tend to show Neda as pro-Green Movement and supporter of Mousavi while her relative repeatedly express that she was neither pro-Mousavi nor Ahmadinejad and she never participate in voting. But after it when Karoubi, one of the Green Movement's leader, meet her family, she is introduced as "martyr" and her mother said: "Neda, like thousands of other young people who are interested in their country's fate; objected to the election results." The

point is that how a person could be worried about the fate of her country and never cast a vote. Or in another sentence, it is quoted by her relative that:

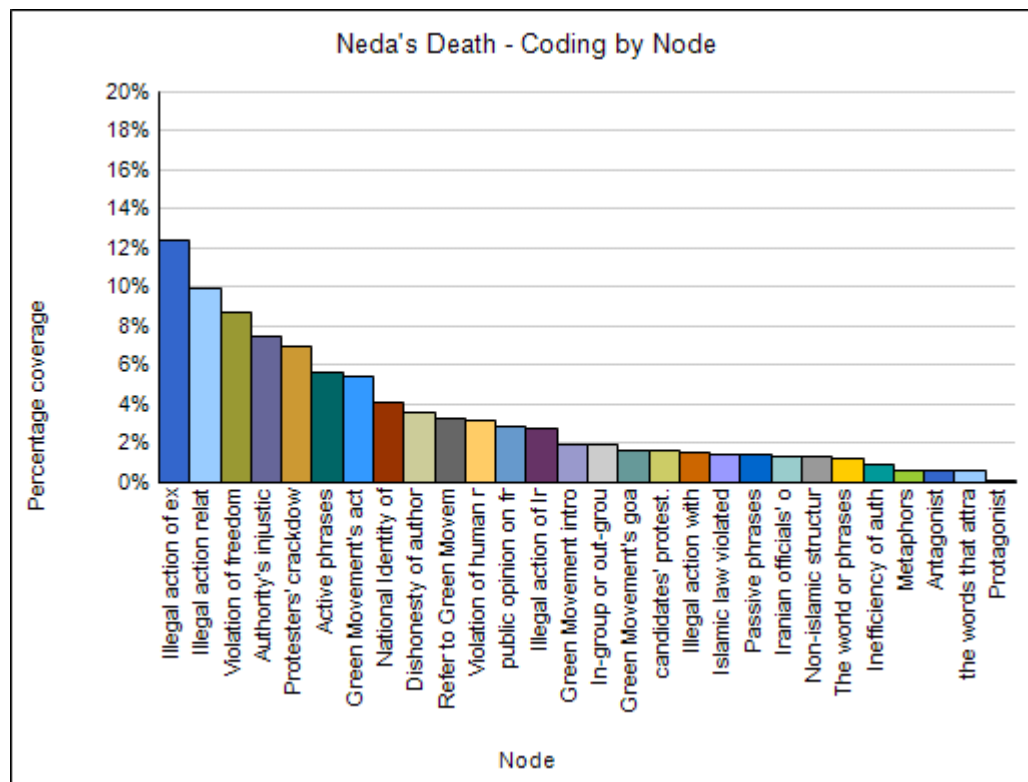
- *Her goal was her country; it was important to her to take steps in this way. She repeatedly pointed out that even if I lose my life and bullet hit my heart, which it happened, I will keep the same way. Neda taught us a great lesson, despite her young age.*

No doubt that Neda was innocent and was killed unfairly, but surely making heroin of her death carried out by the media like the BBCPTV is somehow thought-provoking while there were other victims who were killed in street with a green headband which was the sign of their affiliate with the Green movement.

Considering the *Basij* force as a malefactors who are directly under the command of the supreme leader, fan the flame of unrests while widening the gap between Iran's nations and their religious and political leader. Killing people on the street just for expressing their opinion has no justification in any law, let alone it happen in religious country with sovereignty of Islam.

Emphasize on prevention of holding funeral ceremony that has a special place in Iranian religious belief, by the *Basij* and governmental force, suggest that despite the Iran's authorities' claims, the security of the system are more important than religious ritual. Moreover, dedicated a special place in Behesht-e Zahra cemetery and forcing the deceased relatives to bury their corpse on one hand shows autocracy practice and the injustice of Iran's ruler and on the other hand, it is reminiscent of Iran execution in 1988 that the executors were buried in anonymous and secret grave.

As an overall view, what is emphasized in this news are the perpetrators of Neda's murder that are realized as Basij forces and plainclothes as the governmental forces with Islamic identity. As it is obvious in table (4.3), the illegal actions and dishonesty of Iran's executives in related to protesters crackdown and their injustice are allocated by highest percentage.



**Table 4.3: Neda's death**

The data coded by a non-Islamic structure of system and Islamic law which are violated are as a noticeable points. Violation of freedom of speech among the other nodes has a special place in this chart.

#### 4.2.3.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms

What is more prominent in these news is the crucial role of the *Basij* in crackdown on protestors. The *Basij* is a resistance force that the members joined the group voluntarily, which are mostly student and belong to low level of society. Their operations are under the Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is under the command of supreme leader. Therefore, any brutal action by them attributed to the leader and his supporters. Killing people by *Basij* force as governmental force was confirmatory evidence of outright declaration of war between government with the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei and the protestors to election results. The issue could be interpreted as the identification of “we” against “them” and illustrate in-group and out-group definition.

What fuel this dichotomy is putting forward the name of IRIB’s president, which is directly under the control of Ayatollah Khamenei. In this report, Zarghami, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran broadcasting is accused of misleading the Iranian minds when addressed Neda as an actor and her video as a fictitious film.

Report the Green Movement’s leader visiting Neda’ family and appreciation of Neda’s as mayor, not only attached the Neda to Green Movement but also introduces the Green Movement as a movement which is an advocate of the oppressed against oppressors who are Iran’s governors. It also once again, identified “we” against “them.”

Another important point is funeral ceremony that has a special place among Iranians, religiously and politically. From religious aspect, based on Islamic law, after the dead body is buried with special religious rituals, the deceased’ relative set up the memorial ceremony on occasion of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> day after death. It is an opportunity for their friend to come together to express their sympathy; however, there are special

religious beliefs on these days. Also from political dimension, these chain funerals have a long story in political rallying during the historical tensed periods which predominantly generate a cycle of protests and deaths.

Accusing the governmental force to preventing religious ceremony, on one hand, transfers to the viewer the anti-Islamic face of governors and on the other hand, suggests the fear and weakness of them against the protestors and generating the new unrests.

Interview with the leaders of the movements and pundits was seriously followed the BBCPTV to inform audiences about the recent events. But the interview with the victims and deceased families was an important part of the BBC news room, although interviewees often fall in trouble due to her/his connection with foreign based media. Emphasizing on potential problems that the interviewees will have in Iran, suggests either the violation of freedom of speech in Iran or depth of the catastrophe which was happening in Iran, due to reception of victims to interview without considering the consequences.

Therefore, the governmental forces like “*Basij*”, that were supposed to fight against Islamic Republic’s enemies, now it is identified by the BBCPTV as the Iranian enemies who just seek for their civil rights. In this part inducing the feel of we-ness among the Greens is in highest possible level that is consequence of picturing anti-social norms.

#### **4.2.4 Death of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri**

Hossein Ali Montazeri, the religious leader, born 1922; died 20 December 2009. Based on BBC reports, he received “statue of Human Rights activist” by Human Rights defenders club in Iran at his home on November and before his death. He was most



trusted allies for decades to Ayatollah Khomeini and one of the leaders of the Islamic revolution in 1979. He was supposed to be the Ayatollah Khomeini's successor, but was dismissed by Ayatollah Khomeini due to his protests to human rights status in Iran. He also was under house arrest (1997-2003) for harsh criticism to Ayatollah Khamenei and questioning the power of him. He repeatedly has mentioned in his criticism the "Islamic Republic of Iran is neither Islamic nor republic."

In 2009 after the presidential election, he issued many statements supporting those who opposed the election results and demand prosecution of anybody responsible for abusing the power. The pro-Green Movement called him as the spiritual father of the movement. Therefore, on 20 December, 2009, the Green Movement had lost its spiritual leaders and definitely his funeral could be a new challenge for Iran's authorities. The political nature of mourner was displayed by the presence of Mousavi and Karoubi, the leaders of Green Movement.

What was noticeable is the Ayatollah Khamenei's reaction to his death. He asked "god lenience" for him after failing in his great test with disagreement with Ayatollah Khomeini.

Here is the BBCPTV coverage of this event.

### ➤ **Grand Ayatollah Montazeri Passes Away**

Ayatollah Montazeri was known as the spiritual leader of Green Movement. In this news the BBCPTV attempts to have a quick look at his biography and reminiscences his activities as one of the main founders of the Islamic Republic that had turned to serious criticism of that the system. He is introduced by the presenter with this sentence:

- *Ayatollah Montazeri was considered as the most important dissident Clergymen who severely criticized the government behavior in the aftermath of the election. After the election, Mr. Montazeri criticized the officials of the Islamic Republic's treatment, warned over public distrustful.*

In this report, except some sentences in order to suggest his death, the whole is allocated to his criticism of Islamic Republic's authorities in related to their treatment with the people who "express their grievances through peaceful and legal ways." According to BBCPTV, he called it as "the most catastrophe that the religious scholars have been observed after the revolution."

Also, his harsh criticism expressed in these words:

- *"The governors named the multi-million population the fighters and the rioters and foreign agents and beaten with the worst way and absolute brutality and arrest the defenseless men and women and kill them in the streets or prisons."*

In another paragraph the presenter talks about his request of support for the protestors from Iranian and other Islamic countries' clergies:

- *Ayatollah Montazeri within the past few months, during the numerous statements asked "Shia Marja" Clergymen to support the protesters. He wrote a letter addressed to the Grand Ayatollahs and scholars of the Qom and Najaf, Mashhad, Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz, Iran and other Islamic countries to intervene.*

It reminds that he has been not only too close to Ayatollah Khomeini, but also was successor to him. But he was dismissed by Ayatollah Khomeini after the execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 that was followed by Ayatollah Montazeri's

protest. It is mentioned that he was opposite of the extrajudicial power of Supreme leader that is main institutional principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- *In 1998 Ayatollah Montazeri again questioned the extrajudicial power of the supreme leader. And in his speech he warned about governmental authority of “Marja-e Taghlid” and criticized extrajudicial power of Ayatollah Khamenei. Following these remarks, Mr. Montazeri’s office was destroyed and occupied and Ayatollah Montazeri was under house arresting for a few years.*

#### **4.2.4.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **Shia Marja, successor to Ayatollah Khomeini, Plenipotentiary representative of Ayatollah Khomeini, dissident cleric**

Mentioning Ayatollah Montazeri’s religious authorities (*Marja*) at the first sentence of the report and introducing him as plenipotentiary of Ayatollah Khomeini, determine the political and religious status of him. But when it is followed by “dissident cleric”, who is one of the pillars of the revolution suggest the depth and old disjunction among the authorities.

- **Iran’s executions of 1988, Ayatollah Khomeini dismissed him**

At the next stage the roots of dispute are transparent with bringing the 1988 Iran’s execution up and Ayatollah Montazeri’s criticism to violation of human rights in Iran.

- **Criticized extrajudicial power of Ayatollah Khamenei, Ayatollah Montazeri was under house arresting**

The term of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*”, has a religious and political connotation which was expounded by Ayatollah Khomeini. In this report applying the “extrajudicial power”

instead the “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” is notable. Drawing attention to this definition could approved the role of Ayatollah Khomeini in the recent election, however it has been caused his arresting.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

However the news is related to Ayatollah Montazeri’s death on 20 September, 2009, but it is attempting to reminiscent his background as one of the most influential figures in Islamic revolution who has turned into an outspoken critic. The BBCPTV introduces him as:

- *Before the revolution, he was too closed to Ayatollah Khomeini*
- *During the Ayatollah Khomeini’s exile in Najaf, he was Plenipotentiary Representative of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and he was chosen as Supreme Leader of Iran and successor to Ayatollah Khomeini.*
- *Dissension between Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Montazeri started after the execution of thousands of political prisoners detained in prison in the summer of 1988 that consequently in 1368 Ayatollah Khomeini in a letter dismissed him.*
- *Ayatollah Montazeri in 1371 in a speech criticized Ayatollah Khamenei’s security and military Policy and criticized extrajudicial power of Ayatollah Khamenei.*

Also the BBCPTV quotes his commentaries of aftermath of 2009 election:

- *Iran’s authorities by worst way and Full violence, beaten and arrest the defenseless men and women and kill them in the streets or prisons.*

- *The aftermath of the recent elections as the most catastrophe that the religious scholars have observed after the revolution.*
- *They look for removing social pest which the Iranian officials have been involved.*

- **Passive and active verbs**

The verbs are almost in active form. The name of political figures who participate in Montazeri's funeral is clear. His dissidents with the leaders of the Islamic Republic is in highest level of transparency.

- **Antagonists and protagonists**

No doubt the protagonists of the story is Ayatollah Montazeri, who repeatedly addressed as the spiritual father of the reforms movement and the rulers of Islamic Republic, who are identifies as the absolute antagonists of the story.

#### **4.2.4.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

Date of the news is December 20. 2009. The source of news is the BBC news and Iran's News agencies. The theme/subtheme of news is fraud in the election and Green Movement, Islam and Islamic system and its authorities and violation of human rights in the Islamic system.

The Green Movement's activities are framed based on lack of freedom of speech and human rights in Iran. The report of Ayatollah Montazeri's death is wholly, picturing the Islamic government in an inefficiency, injustice and corruption framework. The Islamic identity of the system and its political and religious legitimacy are entirely under the question that in turn creates a negative attitude toward Islam.

At the beginning of the news, the presenter introduces Ayatollah Montazeri, as a “*Shia Marja*.” It is followed by the other title of “dissident cleric.” When someone is labeled with “*Marja*” or source of emulation, it shows his religious authorities to make legal decisions based on Islamic law for the followers. While a person in this position is in contrary with an Islamic system, at first step the religious legitimacy of that system is under question. Furthermore, when he has a special place in political history of that system, thus, the political legitimacy is at risk as well.

Regarding his disagreement with the current government and his strong opposition with the supreme leader, it was obvious that the clerics who are affiliated with Ayatollah Khamenei not participate in his ceremony. The BBCPTV once again naming the present clerics while attracts attention to strict security measurements around his home.

Emphasize on the participation of some Grand Ayatollahs while the others are absent, the BBCPTV tries to show the fracture in the body of the Islamic system.

The presenter in continue refers to his background with terse statements about his political and religious activities. According to BBCPTV he had blamed the governors for the recent conflicts and called it as rough suppression of whom their request is now beyond nullification of the election and addressed the Iran’s authorities as “social pests.”

In these sentence the BBCPTV puts the protestors directly against the governors and talk about their goals that are beyond the protests to election results and is removal of social pests. These statements have no interpretation but undermining and destruction of the Islamic system, the system which is accused of inefficiency and injustice.

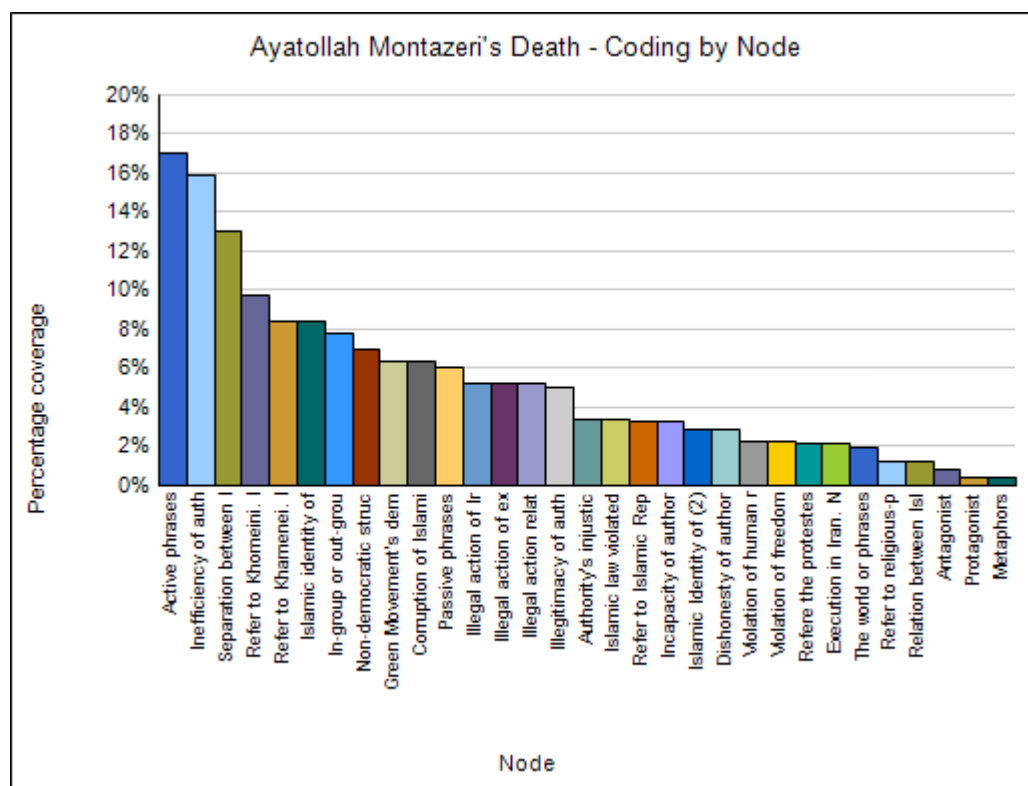
In another part, it is said that he had reminded the aftermath of the election as the most catastrophe that the religious scholars have observed and had requested for helping-hand

from Grand Ayatollahs around the Iran and even in Najaf to solve the problems. Actually, his request form religious leaders confirm the implement of anti-religious actions by the authorities.

As it is mentioned before, he was known by pro-Green Movements as the spiritual father of the reform movement. Based on this news, the protestors are defenseless people who are killed in the streets. Indeed, once more, it refers to the brutality of the Islamic authorities who has no fear to shed innocent blood.

At the last part of the report, the BBCPTV has a glance to his closed relation with Ayatollah Khomeini, since his exile in Najaf and after the Islamic revolution. What has been stressed by the BBCPTV is reminiscent of 1988 Iran's mass execution in Iran as a matter of dispute between Ayatollah Montazeri and Khomeini. In the years before Ayatollah Khomeini's death, many of opposites member of various group were executed that is one of the Islamic Republic's redline. Entrance to redline and reminding one of the most horrible action by Iran's authorities is revealing injustice and dictatorship nature of the Islamic government. It is proved by following his intense criticism of Ayatollah Khamenei, regarding his power as illegal power that was eventuated to his house arresting for 6 years.

According to table (4.4) the inefficiency of Iran's authorities which refers to Iran's leaders is more prominent as well as emphasize on separation among them. Illegal action against protestors to election results which is interpreted to corruption and violation of Islamic law, are coded as an important issue accentuated by the BBCPTV. Violation of human rights and freedom of speech is also interpolate in this report.



**Table 44: Ayatollah Montazeri's death**

#### 4.2.4.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms

It is obvious that Ayatollah Montazeri's death puts the government in a serious dilemma. On one hand, preventing the people from mourning for their religious leader was impossible and on the other hand, it could be the spark for a new unrest. Another complex issue was his position among the Grand Ayatollahs, inside and outside of Iran. Any reaction from the leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, could have a significant reflection. Although he could not conceal his position and in his letter of condolence, implicitly, condemn his political status against Ayatollah Khomeini.

Actually the tensions over his death happened at the sensitive moments and at the heart of political and religious crack. Both the 2009 presidential election and even his death



were as a new round of his conflicts and struggle with the Iran's Islamic ruler after years of seclusion. His unwavering support of protestors to election results and strong criticism of government for what he called illegal and non-Islamic action. His empathy and supportive statement were caused to name him as the spiritual father of Green Movement.

Indeed, for the BBCPTV the death of Grand Ayatollah paved the way to excavate the whole history of Islamic Republic of Iran. The presenter tries to remind one of the most catastrophe has happened in 1988 under the name of "political purge." Iran's authorities executed political prisoners and opposite parties. However, the exact number of executed remains a point of contention, but Amnesty International recorded the name of 4482 prisoners who were disappeared during this time while the opposition group suggest more than 30000 dissidents which are likely executed. Although Iran's authorities has been denied the mass execution, but it is a painful issue for Iranian people which has not been solved and is open to discuss till now. Ayatollah Montazeri as the first person who discloses that illegal and brutal action, incurring ayatollah Khomeini's wrath and was dismissed from successor.

Another point that is brought up by the BBCPTV in this news is "*Velayat-e-Faqih*" that after the election turn to a hot issue. The doctrine of "*Velayat-e-Faqih*" is founded by Ayatollah Khomein. As he argued the Islamic government should be run in accordance to "Sharia" or Islamic law. It happens when an Islamic jurist or "*Faqih*" oversee the country's political structure. Although the system of government is based on three pillars power: the executive, judicial and legislative branches, but the "*Faqih*" or supreme leader is on top of the structure. It means extrajudicial power of leader and

Inseparability of religion and politics in Islamic Republic of Iran. According to the BBCPTV it has been the origin of dissident between Ayatollah Montazeri and Ayatollah Khamenei.

After the presidential election, the thought of separation of religion from politics turned to the hot issue and the concept of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” as a political and religious norm, was criticized by the pro-Green Movement. Accordingly, violation of human rights and dictatorial nature of the system are the two-elements which are identified as an integral part of the Islamic Revolution, associated with the Islamic system from the beginning of the revolution. It puts both Islamism and republican of revolution under the question as Ayatollah Montazeri repeatedly mentioned on different occasions.

#### **4.2.5 Ashura Events**

The death of Ayatollah Montazeri, spiritual father of Green Movement, had brought hundreds of thousands of mourners out again. They shouted such slogans as “death to dictator” or “Montazeri is not dead, it is the government which is dead.” In fact, the mourning turned into a massive anti-governmental rally. The intense clashes between governmental force and the mourners caused his funeral was cancelled by his family after they found the mosque was filled with the *Basij* and guard forces.

On the other hand, Death of Grand Ayatollah, was simultaneous with Moharram that is the most important of Shia’s mourning ceremony. It commemorates the death of “Imam Housein”, the grandson of Prophet Mohammad. He was killed due his stand against the then illegitimate rulers. His motto was “the believers never accept abjection.” He was killed in “*Ashura*” the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Moharram.

Getting close to *Ashura* and the propinquity of the story to what the opposite claim, added the concern about the possible violence against protesters by security force during the morning. Amnesty International has urged the Iranian authorities do not allow *Ashura*'s mourner's face arbitrary arrest or batons. According to BBCPTV International Campaign for Human Rights issued a statement, condemning the recent attacks on participants in mourning for Ayatollah Montazeri and express concern to rising tensions on the eve of *Ashura*. Here are some selected of the BBCPTV coverage of *Ashura*:

➤ **Amnesty International: Ashura must be the End of Violence**

Basically, when the Amnesty International issues the statement, the violation human rights is in the center of attention. As the BBCPTV reports in this news, the human rights watch in the Middle East expressed his concerned about *Ashura*'s ceremony due to some reports that suggest the possible violence. This news also reports the Ayatollah Montazeri's funeral, which has already been cancelled by his family to avoid possible conflicts. Although Amnesty International condemned the Iran's authority due to prevent the mourning:

- *Aaron Rhodes, a spokesman for the organization said that Iranian officials should not have the right to violate people's rights in mourning for Ayatollah Montazeri, or any other person.*

Also in this news, Amnesty International considers the coming days as a "Warning Bell" for those who express their religious feeling; although knows it as an inalienable right of people:

- *According to Iran and international laws expressing emotions, not only is necessary, but also is one of the basic principles of human morality.*

### ➤ **Intense Strife in Ashura Protests**

Since the *Ashura* ceremony is one of the most important religious ritual among the Shiites, death of some protestors in this day had a wide repercussion among Iranians. As it is reported in this news, the nephew of Mousavi, the Green Movement's leader, was among the dead bodies. Notably, the BBCPTV insists on the reports received from eyewitness in Iran.

After the announcement of death toll, which is 4 persons accordingly, the presenter checks some Iranian governmental news agencies that have rejected any report in relation to death of protesters:

- *Fars News Agency, a pro-government news agency, according to the security force, while reporting the incidents of Tehran, emphasized that the police department has not received any report related to death toll yet.*

And immediately in a different state, the arrest of some "Overconfident person" is confirmed by Iran's deputy chief of police:

- *On the other hand, Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan, deputy chief of police said that 10 to 15 of "Overconfident persons" were arrested during the Ashura protests in Tehran and Mr Radan in an interview with ISNA, confirmed that they belong to Basij who have "no mission" to confront with protesters. IRNA also reported the detention of unknown number of protesters during Ashura.*

The more noticeable report belongs to the death of a young man who was shot in the street that shows the intensity of violence in clash between anti-riot police and protestors:

- *An eyewitness told the BBC Persian at the intersection of Zartosht and Palestinian St., one of the protesters was shot by security officers and they run over his body by a Patrol car.*

In most of the sentences the presenters calls the protestors as the “mourner opponents” that has religious connotations, although it is quoted by some Iranian non-governmental news sites.

The BBCPTV with reflects of clashes between protestors and anti-riot police in almost all major cities of Iran, tries to show its contrary to what the police had claimed before Ashura:

- *Police had warned before Muharram that if anybody on the sideline of mourning, do breaking security, will be arrested. However Kar news agency reported Brigadier General Esmail Ahmadi Moghadam’s quotation that as long as the protesters’ behavior does not lead to confusion and offense and chaos, we will give a hint of condescension." He also answered the question that how they deal with protesters, he told we are supposed to use the least violence. The police chief also stressed that if they act toward destruction and violence, we reply their act seriously.*

➤ **Tehran Prosecutor: Organized Violence of Ashura is the Best Example of Moharebeh**

What is underlined in this news is Iran's Prosecutor's claims based on implicated terrorist groups like PMOI<sup>35</sup> and some other non-Muslims in Ashura's events. He gives notice of arresting five people in charge of "Mohareb."

- *The Baha'is that have been arrested recently were on charges of organizing riots on Ashura. The Tehran prosecutor added: the defendants' indictment, including their pleading, is issued and sent to Revolutionary Court. Tehran prosecutor said organizing the Ashura's violence by them, is the best example of Mohareb.*

In a short explanation, due to discuss in details later, the word "Mohareb" is the title of a crime in Islamic Law and translate into English-language as "war against God and the state." It is a capital crime in Islamic Republic of Iran and usually carries the death penalty.

The prosecutor also adds about the suspected activities:

- *The Baha'is arrested in the wake of the events of Ashura, having a role in organizing chaos, send many images out of the country; the main reason that they have been arrested and not for religious reasons and during the inspection of their home, some guns and bullets were discovered.*

Now the BBCPTV presents his explanation based on the denial of all charges:

---

<sup>35</sup> . The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, is an Iranian Marxist political-militant organization in exile that advocates a violent overthrow of the ruling system in Iran while claiming itself as the replacing shadow government.

- *Diane Alai, the Baha'i representative to the United Nations said in a statement:*  
*"This allegation is a blatant lie. One of the fundamental principles of Baha'is*  
*believes is a non-violence as the absolute word. Finding guns in their home or*  
*bullets is absolutely incredible. "*

The presenter in further details explains about what happened with *Ashura* and the number of casualties and arresting of some political activists and journalists. Also, it is emphasized that government officials accused foreign countries and those who seek the overthrow of Islamic government for all misdeed.

#### ➤ **Parliament Harsh Reaction to Ashura**

The speaker of parliament, according to the news, has asked the judicial authorities to confront with who are against the supreme leader and *Velayat-e Faghih*, considering no excuse. He accused the protestors to disrespect of *Ashura* and starting a war against God and *Rasoul*. He named *Velayat-e-Faghih* as Imam Khomeini's heritage:

- *Insult to Velayat-e-Faghih that is the Imam's intellectual heritage and fruit of*  
*the blood of hundreds of thousand martyrs is an insult to the supreme leader and*  
*Islam and asked the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Information and the*  
*judiciary to arrest them and punish them.*

Accordingly, he warns those who issue statements and make the atmosphere dustier to separate their path. Based on the BBCPTV, he implicitly, has been on talking with the Green Movement's leader who sharply criticized Iran's governors to "break the sanctity of *Ashura* and slaughter the mourners."

Also relevant to this news, one of the parliament's members has addressed the Green Movement's leaders:

- *“Those who say death to the principle of “Velayat-e-Faqih”, are apostate and should be punished by judiciaries.”*

According to Iran's news agencies, as the presenter expresses, after Mr. Larijani's speech as parliament speaker, all parliament members, with any affiliation, including minority and majority, marching and chanting slogan in support of *Veleyat-e-Faqih* and Ayatollah Khamenei. And in further explanation the BBCPTV presenter completes the news with a contradictory news from opposite website:

- *But Khabar Online website reported that several representatives' unwilling to company with others lead to conflict between them and parliament security team. A member of the security team, in protest to non-participation of some representatives, who are the member of minority Fraction, in aggregation, called them traitors, which leaded to verbal and physical contention.*

#### **4.2.5.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **Ashura, Warning bell for mourners**

*“Ashura”* is the day of the martyrdom of Imam Husein and his family and the significance of events at Karbala. Considering the *Ashura* as a “warning bell” for the mourner has a heavy negative connotation and is somehow conveyed of bad feeling about imminent events.



- **Attack to the mourners' protestors**

A combination of two words “protestor” and “mourner” have a complex meaning. It has both political and religious connotation. Even the first one justifies the governmental forces' attack to them, but the second never cover up their illegal actions.

- **Killing mourners, going over dead body**

Killing protestors and running over a dead body in *Ashura*, is again reminiscent of martyrdom of Imam Housein that according to Islamic history was killed the same way. Actually, it totally shows the oppression and brutality of the governors.

- **Ban the journalist from covering the news**

Basically preventing the journalist from coverage of events indicate something behind the curtain. It means that there is something that Iran's government prefer to be covered from public judgments.

- **Disrespecting *Ashura*, war against God and his *Rasoul*, chanting against *Velayat-e-Faghih*, severest punishment**

Addressing the protesters as those didn't keep the sanctity of the *Ashura* by Iran's parliament, and knowing it equal to “war against God” and his *Rasoul*, providing a good excuse for intense punishment. War against God that is known as “*Mohareb*” is a capital crime in Islamic Republic of Iran and Iranian are familiar with this term due to widely used by Iran's judiciary for who take up arms against the state. As it is clear in this news, dissident with “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” is also counted in line with “*Mohareb*”. The punishment for “*Mohareb*” is the death penalty.

- **“*Velayat-e-Faqih*” as Khomeini’s intellectual heritage, fruit of the blood of hundreds of thousands martyr, insulted to the supreme leader and Islam**

For more emphasize on opposites’ crime as a matter of utmost importance, once again, dissident with “*Veleyat-e-Faqih*” is considered as disagreement with Ayatollah Khomeini’s thought and trample martyr’s blood who devoted their life for the Islamic revolution and at the end, it is equal with insult to Islam and supreme leader. Actually political, religious and ideological opposition in Iran’s Islamic system is intertwined.

- **Those who say death to the principle of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” are apostate, Mousavi, Karroubi approved their apostasy by supporting chanting against the principle of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*”**

In this part dissident to “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” is considered as “apostasy” that is another unforgivable crime in Islam with death penalty. Accusing the Green Movement’s leader to apostasy, in fact, confirmed their death sentence or at least tough punishment for them.

- **Baha’i, “*Ashura*”**

Connecting the *Ashura*’s events to the Baha’is is closely associated with war of religion. Killing of the Muslims by the Baha’is, who didn’t believe secrecy of *Ashura* is more explainable that by the believers.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

During the news relating to *Ashura*, the BBCPTV tries to picture the ferocity of Iran’s governors, who nothing prevented them even what they believe as ritual religious like *Ashura*. The Amnesty International statements are reported by the BBCPTV repeatedly

to show international community and human right activists' concern about the human right status in Iran:

- *Amnesty International has urged the Iranian authorities don't allow Ashura's mourner face arbitrary arrest or batons*
- *Human Rights Watch asked Iran authorities not allow the Basij intervention and let the protestors demonstrate peacefully.*
- *According to International Campaign for Human Rights, Ashura is a warning bell for those who want to show their religious feeling in Ashura. Their life is in real danger in the coming days.*

On the other hand, informing protestors about their rights not only encourage people to proceed their action, but also shows illegal actions and behaviors of the officials:

- *According to Iran and international laws expressing emotions, not only is necessary, but also is one of the basic principles of human morality.*

Reporting the number of dead people before confirmation by Iran's officials and accusing them of lying with comparing contradictory statements:

- *Eyewitness reports from Iran indicated that four protesters were killed and Mousavi's nephew was among dead bodies.*
- *An eyewitness told the BBC Persian one of the protesters was shot by security officers and they run over his body by a Patrol car. "But" ISNA news agency quoted on behalf of Tehran police that "we didn't received any news of the death today so far."*

In other sentences the presenter puts again the oppressed, who marched peacefully against the oppressors who have no mercy to even injure body. The Karoubi's statements are also quoted for providing the subject:

- *According to witnesses, a group of protesters has been taken to hospital and the police are trying to stamp them out of the hospital. Injured protesters allegedly are avoided to transfer to ambulance in fear of transferring to detention by police officers.*
- *Police and plainclothes attacked protesters who have been marching peacefully and demonstration has turned to violence.*
- *Mehdi Karroubi, sharp criticism of the Iranian government to "break the sanctity of 'Ashura' and slaughter the mourners."*

While Iran's authorities blamed the Baha'is for orchestrating the *Ashura's* events, reported the Baha'is defense against the accusations.

- *The Tehran prosecutor told the Baha'is arrested in the wake of the events of Ashura, having a role in organizing chaos, send many images out of the country; He also said: "during the inspection of their home, some guns and bullets were discovered." However the Baha'i International Community denied such allegation and their representative in United Nations said in a statement: "This allegation is a blatant lie. One of the fundamental principles of Baha'is believes is non-violence as the absolute word. Finding guns in their home or bullets is absolutely incredible."*

While Iran's official reported the marching and chanting of parliamentarians in full support of Ayatollah Khamenei, the BBCPTV reports the controversy news:

- *Mr. Bahonar said that "all members of any affiliations, including minority and majority" have participated in the march, but Khabar Online website reported that several representatives, unwillingness to company with others, caused verbal and physical contention."*

- **Passive and active verb**

The news the coverage *Ashura* events are mostly in active form, whether in relation with international organization and human right's activists warning or in relation with death toll. The *Basij* and governmental forces are the main accused of killing protestors who with their leaders are in charge of "apostate" due to their dissident with "*Velayat-e-Faqih*".

- **Protagonists and antagonists**

The protagonists of the story are the innocent people who peacefully demanded for their inalienable rights and Iran's authorities and governmental force, on top of them *Basij* are introduced as antagonists of the *Ashura* story.

#### **4.2.5.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The news were broadcast on 24 December, 2009 till 9 January, 2010. The source of News is the BBC News and Iran's News agencies. The theme/subtheme is referred to Green Movement and its leaders. Iranian religious and national identity beside the Islamic structure of the system, and its legitimacy are more prominent in reports while human rights and democracy in Iran are the issues which has been paid much attention by the BBCPTV .

In these news not only the emotional angle is highlighted but also the religious aspect of the events are focused. The framing is centered by conflicts on a sacred day that has a special connotation and is reminiscent of innocent and martyrdom in Shiite's beliefs. In this framework killing unarmed people motivate the psychological dimensions that leads the public to the highest degree of negative attitude toward the crisis and government is settled in level of responsibility by the BBCPTV.

What is obvious in these news is concentration on *Ashura* as a sacred day for Muslims on the occasion of martyrs of Imam Hossein and "slaughtering the mourners" by governmental forces. It is totally portraying the war between religion and politics in an Islamic state. The BBCPTV with bolding the *Ashura* events pictured the brutality of the Iran's government and their inflexibility against public demands that shows the nature of the dictatorship of Islamic Republic as well.

Intense clashes between protestors and governmental forces during the Ayatollah Montazeri's funeral suggested more serious conflicts in coming days that was simultaneous with Muharram and *Ashura*. The BBCPTV, before *Ashura*, transmitted the concerns of human rights activist about the imminent danger that threatened Iranian. What is noticeable is that all precautions and messages has addressed the Iran's authorities and *Basij* forces. During the news, people never were asked to stay at home, but instead, they were awarded of their rights to expressing their emotions, based on Iran rules and international laws.

The BBCPTV covers the bloody day of *Ashura* while the Iran's authorities and governmental news agencies denied every death report. The reports of death were so precise that even covered the way that protestors were killed; falling a wounded man

beside the street and the absence of ambulance service, running over the dead bodies and pushing people from the top of the bridge, are all display the *Ashura* catastrophe coupled with excessive violence and ferocity of the Islamic system. Actually by such a savage behavior, Islamic Republic undermined its claim to the protector of religious rituals.

In these news the role of the *Basij* force is centered once again, however the Iran's officials called them as "overconfident person" who have no mission to involve in conflicts. It means that they confronted with opposites spontaneously that suggest their social base. When two groups have a social base, who beat the people and who are beaten, it places the Iranian community in front of each other without governmental interference.

Combining tow terms of "mourner" and "protestor" with the BBCPTV and the creation of "the mourner's protestor" has political and religious connotation that the religious dimension is bolded in this day. Indeed, mourning for the protestors considered as a shield which should have immured the protestors but it did not happen. Highlighting the religious aspect of *Ashura* events, put the Islamic identity of both the Islamic system and Iranian under a big question.

It is noticeable that the Iran's parliament exactly emphasized on the religious dimension of the issue. According to the BBCPTV, Iran's parliament has a harsh reaction to these events, but not only did not condemn assaulting the protesters, but addressed them as "*Mohareb*" who their punishment is death. The speaker of parliament accuses the protestors and their leaders to "war against God" and desecration of the Imam Hossein and *Ashura*; however he embossed his statements with the political side of the matter.

He also points to their slogans and dissident to “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” that in Islamic Republic of Iran is not less than *Mohareb*. The BBCPTV, also, putting forward one of the members of parliament that take the *Ashura* events as a good opportunity to realize the enemies of the system. In addition, he asked severest punishment for them.

While the Iran’s parliament justifies the authorities’ action in *Ashura* and reports the full support of parliament’s member with their slogan and marching in the protection of Ayatollah Khamenei, the BBCPTV repot the clash among the parliament members with this phrase:

- *“Although Mr. Bahonar said: all members of any affiliations, including minority and majority have participated in the march, but Khabar Online website reported that several members’ unwillingness to company with others, led to verbal and physical contention.”*

In this part, the BBCPTV draw attentions to dispute within parliament and among the members who are representative of Iranian, and false reported news from governmental news agencies as well.

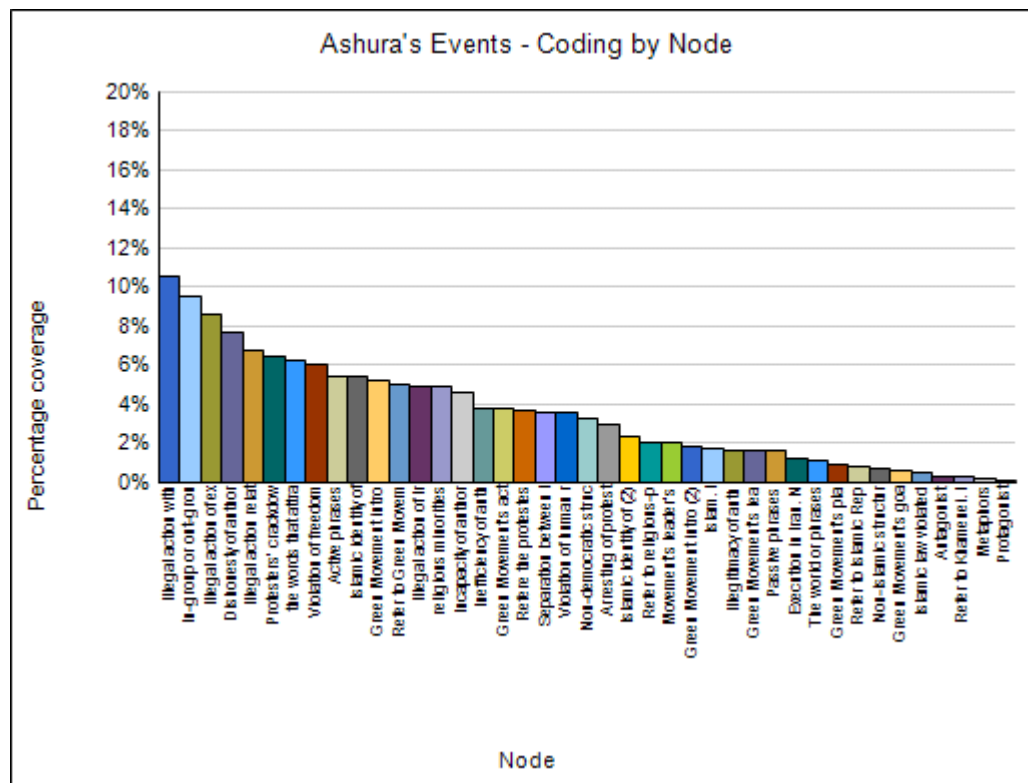
At the end of the story, Tehran’s prosecutor, reports the arrest of perpetrators of *Ashura*’s event. But what makes the issue complex is that according to his report, the convicts were not Muslim and belong to Baha’is population in Iran. It means rejection of all accusation of Iran’s official to killing mourners in *Ashura*. The Prosecutor, also, accounted their charges that were included sending many images out of the country and keeping guns and bullets at home. But the BBCPTV, according to the Baha’i International Community, reject that claims and underscore that:



- *Diane Alai, the Baha'i representative to the United Nations said: This allegation is a blatant lie. One of the fundamental principles of Baha'is believes is non-violence as the absolute word. Finding guns in their home or bullets is absolutely incredible.*

Concentrating on “non-violence” as a “principles of Baha'is believes” putting the fundamental of Islamic believes under the question.

No doubt, *Ashura* was the climax of the conflicts after the election that put the authorities in serious challenge. The death tolls in this religious festival, infuriated many *Iranians and the* country facing a potentially unbridgeable political divide amid an escalating cycle of violence.



**Table 4.5: Ashura**

The protests, during the commemorating the death of Imam Hussein, Shiite Islam's holiest martyr in *Ashura's* day, was the bloodiest and the largest unrest since the uprisings that followed the controversial presidential election in June. The decision by the authorities to use deadly force on the sacred *Ashura* inflamed public feelings. It is considered as the social and religious norm-breaking by Iran's Authorities.

Thus, as shown in table (4.5), the most data are coded by illegal actions of Iran's executives and their dishonesty. Their illegal and unusual actions in related to protestors in *Ashura* lead to violation of Islamic law and on the other hand freedom of speech that specified with high percentage of coding. Another point that is focused in these news is determining and identifying the line between oppressors and oppressed or in other words, in-group and out-group that in turn has an important role in the legitimacy of the Islamic system and Green Movement in this specific case.

#### **4.2.5.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms**

“*Muharam*” and “*Ashura*” are a very symbolic day in Iranian religious culture. The massacre of “*Karbala*” (the location of war) and martyr of Hossein and his follower influence Iranian public and political life. *Ashura's* ceremony revivifies the war between good and devil, and the innocents were killed by a villain. It also shapes the culture of martyrdom in Shi'a Islam that has a special place in the political and religious identity of Iranians. It is noticeable that it has a crucial role in the years ended to 1979 Islamic revolution of Iran. During the history of Iran, *Muharram's* prohibition of violence, even during wartime, has been regarded as great respect.

All things considered, attacking to “mourners’ protestor”, exactly the term that the BBCPTV used during the reports, has neither political nor religious justification; however an Iranian official tries to shirk their responsibility.

Before the *Ashura*’s events occurred, everything was as clear as daylight. The Green Movement specified its goals and demands that were beyond the nullification of the election results and targeted the principal of the Islamic system and “*Velayat-e-Faqih*”. On the other side there was Ayatollah Khamenei and his followers and the plainclothes and *Basij* force which were under his command. And it seems the BBCPTV has been very successful to identify in-group and out-group or “we” against “them.”

Accordingly, “we” are those defenseless and innocent people who seek for their citizen rights that is freedom of speech and opinion and freedom of expressing their feelings without any violence. They are identified with green color that has a special place in Iranian religious beliefs. And in front there are “them” who are equipped with any types of weapons who are provided by the central power. They are seemingly attached to Islamic system, but for their survival do any brutal behavior that has no place in religious concepts. Addressing Ayatollah Khamenei, directly, by human rights’ organizations that the BBCPTV reports in details, illustrate the issue as well.

However, imagination of hypothetical enemies in any political crisis is an integral part of Iran’s policy, that in aftermath of election it was foreign media agencies and their owners. But according to the BBCPTV, in *Ashura*’s events, Iranian authorities introduce an actual enemy. They blamed the Baha’s community to orchestrating the unrests and killing the mourners. Indeed, Iran’s authorities hope to justify the illegal and non-

religious behavior in *Ashura* by putting non-Muslim as the prime suspect of crimes. Maybe killing Muslims by non-Muslims vindicate their deportments.

The news reported by the BBC is relevant to *Ashura*, entirely replete with roughness, cruelty, inefficiency and unjust suppression and weakness of rulers that all remove the legitimacy of Iranian authorities, politically and religiously. The 2009 Iran's *Ashura* events, not only ordinary people, but also many high-ranking Ayatollahs protested these violations on the occasion of *Ashura*.

What the BBCPTV reported in this event was identification of real face of Islamic Republic of Iran. It is introduced as a system that is adhere to any Islamic law and religious norm.

#### **4.2.6 Kahrizak Detention**

During the riots after the election and especially on *Ahura*, the cycle of arrests, detention, force confessions, trials and sentencing continues in Iran. The reports from inside and outside of Iran suggested the arresting of more than 1000 individuals that known political and social activists were among them.

Human Rights Watch, frequently, had expressed their concerns about the detainees and human rights condition in Iran. They conducted interviews with political figures, human rights activists or journalists in Iran and their reports indicated widespread governmental crackdown and violation of human rights whether in the streets or police stations and detention centers.

The Kahrizak detention center was known after the 2009 election. It is located outside of Tehran had been planned for thugs and drug addicted who endangering public

opinion. But after the election, Iran's judicial system decided to transfer the arrested protestors to this center and also to "Evin" and "Rajaei Shahr," however the Kahrizak was the most horrific and notorious one.

On August 2010, various reports of rape and torture of prisoners in Iran had been leaked, but none of them were being approved by the authorities in Iran. Amnesty International Human rights organization announced in a statement asked Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader for the immediate formation of an independent investigator commission and inviting international experts to inquire about the alleged torture of men and women in recent events. It turned to a toughie when Ayatollah Karoubi, one of the leaders of Green Movement, publicized the issue and put the Iran's authorities in a complex challenge. The selected news in related to Kahrizak is as follow:

➤ **A Journalist Reports on Kahrizak**

At first, the BBCPTV gives some information about the history of Kahrizak with this words:

- *Kahrizak in Shahr-e Ray in 2003 was used for keeping hooligan and mischief makers. Since then, some number of human rights activists and the Association for the Defense of Prisoners objected to manner of arrest and behave with detainees. But what made the Kahrizak to grab the headlines was that during the recent unrest in Iran after the presidential election that a number of detainees were transferred to this center.*

Further information is quoted by Hanif Mazrui, member of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, journalist and blogger in Tehran:

- *Detention is directly under the supervision of the security police. Kahrizak in southern Tehran is located in the middle of the desert. Based on what we've heard there are about two or three sheds in this area and in each shed there are 10-20 containers and the detainees are kept inside the container. It is said that during the recent conflicts they were pushed, between 20-40 people, into these rooms by force while this room are planned at most for five. According to this journalist the only air chamber is a small hole for the entrance of air.*

The presenter report the number of detainees, about 300-400 persons, and the methods of torturing in this detention.

- *Detainees were beaten with a variety of cables and hoses and those arrested on the 18th of July, were stripped and after watering them with strong water pressure, beat them with the hose and cable.*

To confirm this paragraph, it is quoted from a *journalist* who was tortured in detention:

- *One of our friends who is a journalist, was arrested sometimes ago and was beaten in detention and for confession a question, they knocked his head on the table till he passed out.*

At the end, it is mentioned that there is no exact information about the place of some detention like “Pasargad” and no Judiciary organization has access to this center and even the name of the detainees are not registered.

➤ **Amnesty International: Iran's Supreme Leader Do Organize the Independent Research Commission**

The news started with Amnesty International's announcement that through a statement asked Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, for the immediate formation of an independent investigator commission and invited international experts to inquire about the alleged torture of men and women in recent events. And for further details follows by the Amnesty international report:

- *Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International, said that reports from Iran indicate that men and women are raped and tortured, in some cases leading to death. He added that this type of behavior is to be done just to humiliate them, and if the accuracy be approved, those responsible should be prosecuted as soon as possible.*

In addition, while the presenter reviews the details of the issue, mentions that Iran's authorities insist on rumors of sexual harassment in detainees based on their accurate investigations.

By the end it is added that the details of the investigation are asked by Amnesty International to determine whether the research has been done by an independent panel. Emphasize on "independent team" suggests unreliability of Iran's reports and seriousness of human rights violation in Iran.

➤ **Karroubi Meet the Special Committee on Alleged Rape of Detainees**

The whole of the News is centered by sexual abused and the evidences that presented by the Green Movement's leader on one hand and the denial of Iran's

authorities and their efforts to keep it in secret on the other hand. According to the news, Karroubi has scheduled the negotiations with the heads of legislative, and judiciary bodies and a meeting with 4, who claimed to be raped in prisons and simultaneously he has published the details of Kahrizak events in his website, based on detainees' testifies. Another topic that is prominent in this news is the detainees' fear of talking about what happened to them in detainee due to horrible behavior of executors that is quoted from one of detainees' testify in web site:

- *Three Judiciary officers were trying to destroy my character to force me confess that Mr.Karroubi has taken me money and supports me to claim such a thing.*

And in another paragraph, targets the legitimacy of government, and puts the Islamic and religious identity of the government under the question when expresses her object to the way she was treated in detainee:

- *I was in prison with handcuffs and shackles, and they beat me to death and do something with me that you never see such a treatment on behalf of "unbelievers and infidels" and I dare to iterate the events just for Mr.Karroubi.*

And what is quoted in this news in addition to last paragraph, confirms the depth of tragedy:

- *Mohammadi, representative of the Attorney General, after talking with me and seeing my deplorable condition, talk to me very kindly and expressed his regret and said: "shame on us."*

#### ➤ **Karroubi Emphasizes on Rape in Detention**

This news draws attentions to the report of rape in prisons, which has been exposed by one of the Green Movement's leader, Mehdi Karroubi. He insists on evidences and



asked in a letter to the head of IRIB to provide him with a TV platform due to inform people about sexual abused in detentions:

- *General Secretary of the National Trust Party in his letter points out implicitly, some authorities' effort to prevent disclosure of facts relating to the abuse of detainees, including the rape of a number of male and female in detentions.*

He also asked the head of IRIB for the equal opportunity with who addressed his documents unreliable:

- *"Of course I think who try to adjudication and I, must have equal right with who try to hide the crimes, to speak with people through national media tribune."*

It is announced by the BBCPTV that Mehdi Karroubi had provided the evidences of rape in detention, but it was released from Iran's radio and television, that Mr. Karubi has not provided strong evidence of rape in detention.

Accordingly, Saham News, depend on National Trust Party, Mr. Karoubi released the reports and evidence the detainees' sexual abused due to "Public Enlightenment." Upon these reports, one of the detainees who was raped has a meeting with the Attorney General, but they dealt with him/her in horrible ways and asked for reticent about these traumatic events and promise to do every necessary thing to restore their rights through the judicial system.

The Presenter adds the other paragraph to show the depth of catastrophe by Karroubi's sentences:

- *Following the announcement of Karroubi's office the questions and statements proposed by the judicial authorities and their nasty behaviors is not only in their*

*dignity but also you can never see in any court and trial. They scare the detainees instead of ensuring them of security and attempt to suppress them.*

Also, it is added on behalf of Karroubi's office:

- *The Secretary General office of the National Trust expressed his sadness to the behavior of the judicial authorities, declaring that the treatment of detainees clarified that some judicial authorities not only follow the rights of detainees to help if they have been abused, but are trying to clean the issue up."*

At the end, the presenter has a quick glance at the whole events since the beginning of seizure on July 14.2009 and ends the news with following sentence:

- *However, it seems that the institutions of the Iranian theocracy in case of reported rape try to even kill the detainees to hide and clear up the evidence; but it has an adverse reflects, both inside and outside of the country. It is obvious that they probably plan to clear matter, as Mr. Karoubi mentioned before.*

#### **4.2.6.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **Rejection of sexual abused in detentions by Iran's officials, asking for an independent commission to peruse the issue.**

Denial of sexual abuse in detentions of Iranian officials and asking for organization of an independent commission by Amnesty international, confirm strong suspicion of torture of detainees. Emphasize on independent group of international experts shows doubt on governmental reports and likely clandestine matters.

- **Kahrizak as a center for keeping hooligans, transferring the protestors to this center**

Equating hooligans with protestors by Iran's executors is bolding by the BBCPTV in this part.

- **Kahrizak is located at the middle of the desert, the plight of health, pushing 20-40 individuals into rooms which are planned only for 5 persons, the name of detainees are not registered.**

Describing the Kahrizak center by the BBCPTV display the gross human rights violation in Iran's detentions.

- **The detainees claims to be raped, they intend to testify on their own abuses, but do not feel safe, judiciary officers treated them unfriendly, destroy their character, force them to confess that got money from Mr. Karroubi**

It is overall displays illegal actions and additional torturing of detainees after their claims to be sexual abused.

- **Attorney General expresses his feeling about these issues and said: "shame on us."**

The BBCPTV putting forward the attorney general as his reaction to sexual abuse in detention to show the depth of the catastrophe in Islamic system and expressing his regret with the sentence.

- **Public enlightenment by the movement's leader, authorities prevent disclosure of facts relating to the abuse of detainees.**

According to the BBCPTV the Green Movement's leader tried to win media attention and public enlightenment to illegal and injustice action which there is no justification for

them even in non-Islamic states. And Iran's official tries to prevent disclosure of the facts. Putting public enlightenment against concealing the fact, targets the injustice and lying of the Islamic system.

- **Khamenei ordered to closure of illegal detention, it apparently ended to only arresting of some officer.**

The BBCPTV at the end of the news, specifically, draw attention to Ayatollah Khamenei's reaction to the dilemma and his order to closure of illegal actions but in continuing with the reporting of arresting some officer showing lack of seriousness in following the issue.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

The BBCPTV do the best in covering the news in related to torturing and abusing the detainees in Iran. Also, it is attempted to reveal how Iran's executors try to trivialize or even covering the issue up.

- *For the first time, Mehdi Karroubi, one of two candidates who object to result, pay to this issue and in a letter to Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Assembly of Experts asked him to investigate about the rumors spread about the rape of boys and girls in detention.*
- *Iranian parliament speaker Ali Larijani called sexual abuse of detainees untruth and false.*
- *Mehdi Karroubi, rejects a judicial official's statement about the non-documentary evidence about sexual abuse in detention and hold the judicial authorities responsible for the protection and support of complainants.*

- *In a report broadcast by IRIB, Mr. Karroubi's claims about the recent events were called unreliable.*
- *Mehdi Karroubi also in a letter to Zarghami, head of IRIB, asked for an appropriate panel with TV to explain what happened to the public.*
- *It seems that the Islamic institutions of Islamic theocracy in Iran, in case of reported rape and even murder of detainees, hide and clear up the evidence or likely wipe up the issue as Mr. Karroubi mentioned before.*

- **Passive and active verbs**

In these reports there are both passive and active verbs. When the reports belong to following the claims of rape and torturing it is in Active forms and everything and everyone are clear. But when it comes to complainants, it is totally in passive form due security problems.

- **Protagonists and antagonists**

No doubt the protagonist of the story is Mehdi Karroubi, the Green Movement's leader and the antagonists are all Iran's authorities.

#### **4.2.6.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The news have covered the reports of rape in detention from 28 July, 2010 till 2<sup>nd</sup> of September.

Theme/subtheme is fraud in the election and the Green Movement's leader. It also referred to negative aspect of Islamic government and puts its legitimacy under the question as well as human rights and freedom of speech in the Islamic system.

The framing focuses attention on rape in Islamic system coupled with violation of freedom of speech and civil rights. To bring up the Amnesty International announcement in this case and addressing the Iran's leader by the international organization, not only emphasizes on the importance of the issue but also determines the level of responsibility.

Highlighted the sexual abused and humiliate the detainees and torturing them to death, unsettle and annoying every viewer's mind. It could create a kind of pessimism toward Islam and Islamic government. Torturing and sexual abusing of political activists is the evident anti-political and social norms which is not justified by any religion or beliefs and when it comes to Islamic system it turn into a horrible tragedy. The discrimination of in-group and out-group is still obvious during the reports.

Emphasizing on organizing an independent commission to investigate the cases of rape and torturing in detentions, and frequent reports by Amnesty International based on violation of human rights in Iran, approved the unreliability of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the international community.

Describing the Kahrizak as a center for keeping hooligans outside the Tehran, and its horrible condition of detainees at this center is in turn enough for condemning Iran to violation of human rights by human rights activities.

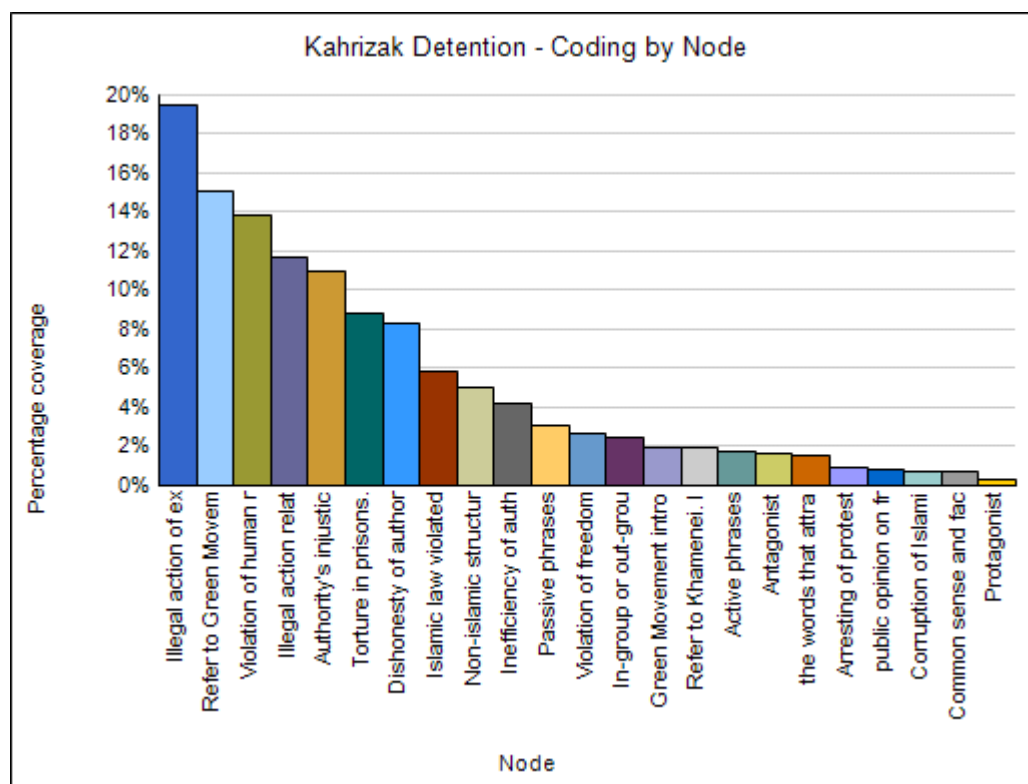
The BBCPTV with picturing the unhealthy situation of the detainees in the details, and the way that they are treated and tortured, and under the anonymity condition, draw attention to the brutality and injustice of the system. Furthermore, it is mentioned that the center is under the direct control of security police, which is under the command of Supreme leader.

The role of Ayatollah Karoubi, the leader of the movement, was too prominent and the BBCPTV with dedicated the special news of his activities and statement in this case is obvious. Reporting his meeting in details and his connection with the victims and trying to unfold the crime, suggests his bravery against who were in possession of all power and refute the allegations.

The tragic part of the story is when the victims express their feeling of insecurity. According to BBCPTV based on Karoubi's quotation, they were threatened by interrogators and were forced to confess to illegal relation with Karoubi. They repeatedly talk about their shattered pride and that deciding for suicide. In one part, quoted by one of the detainees, the BBCPTV challenges directly the Islamism and religion in Iran. He said:

- *"I was in prison with handcuffs and shackles, and they beat me to death and do with me something that you never see such a treatment by unbelievers and infidels."*

Comparing the Iranian authorities with unbelievers or even worst put their claims as claimants of Islam at the serious risk. Moreover rejecting the explicit claims of sexual assault without any satisfactory answer show inadvertence of officials to what is going on Iran or in another interpretation discloses injustice or inefficiency of the rulers of Islamic Republic.



**Table 4.6: Kahrizak**

In the last part of reports, the BBCPTV draw attention to Karoubi's demand for having a TV program to enlighten public opinion and showing the documentary evidence. Popularize the evidence in comparing with covering the evidences up by officials suggests validity and reliability of what the detainees claim.

What is underlined in the News related to Kahrizak, as it is also confirmed by table (4.6), is illegal actions of Iran's authorities and executives that are in high percentage of coding and consequently associated with violation of human rights. Also torture and rape in Kahrizak detention, is coded by violation of Islamic law and corruption in the Islamic system.



Following the issue with Green Movement's leaders and their supports of tortured and endeavors to uncover the matter in question on one hand, and the authorities' scrambles to keep in secrets the calamity to end the tragedy, are as an identifier and the discriminant of in-group and out-group, while in more paragraph name the name of the authorities. Furthermore, as it is shown in table (4.6), it is pointing out the dishonesty and inefficiency of Iran's authorities with noticeable percentages. Referring to detainees' fear of express injustice happened to them is coded by violation of freedom of speech.

#### **4.2.6.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms**

As Amnesty International reported, at least 4,000 people were arrested between June and August of 2009 and at least 112 had been executed, and hundreds more were tortured at the Kahrizak and Evin detention centers (Tait, 2009) that are shocking statistics. Among many stories and news in related to 2009 aftermath election, the brutalities committed in the Kahrizak center became well known internally and internationally.

Rape and sexual insult are an abhorrent crime that is not only strongly forbidden in all religions but also it one of the heinous crime that is unacceptable behavior by some wise people. Islam like other religion, impose the strictest penalties on it. Committing such a crime by Iran's law enforcement officials who are responsible for the imposition of Islamic law, means complete destruction of the Islamic system. It also approved that in this Islamic system, the religious rulers do everything to suppress the dissidents even sexual harass.

Execution, humiliation, torturing and sexual abusing of the people who demand for their political rights in free and fair elections and also, according to the BBCPTV introduction of the Green Movement, conduct peaceful protests, have no justification. However, it could justify the rise of the secularizing rational forces that challenged all historical and religious authorities during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Actually the Islamic Republic, after 31 years lost its both, Islamic identity and religious and political legitimacy.

The role of national TV is too highlighted in these news as a power in hands of authorities, especially supreme leader. According to the BBCPTV, Karoubi's reporting through websites also prominent the role of cyberspaces as a means of enlightening public opinion.

#### **4.2.7 Detention of Green Movement's Leaders**

Considering the aftermath of the 2009 election as a "sedition", the Iran's authorities blamed arrogant power and foreign media to deceive people and incitement to street riots and civil disobediences. After 21 month, however, there were no major widespread protests and official declared the death of sedition, but every insignificant issue could be as new spark of rebellion. These challenges to the government could not be tolerated any longer, especially after Karroubi and Mousavi's proclamation on February 5, and asking people to come out in support of the wave of demonstrations in Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings on 14 February. But the government response to their call was rapid and harsh.

Security force started preventive measures and initiated a wave of arresting of journalist and opposites activists. Moreover, on February 11, Sahamnews website, affiliated with reformist party, reported Karroubi's house arresting accompany with his wife. Also On February 13, a close aide to Mousavi told BBCPTV that communication lines to Mousavi and his wife had been cut, and definitely police security forces had placed them under house arrest. Kaleme, a website affiliated with Mousavi, said their house has besieged by security forces to preventing him and his wife from joining the protesters.

The crackdown on opposition figures leading up to the February 14 protests was accompanied by a massive clampdown on the free flow of information inside the country. Despite all tight security measures, the widespread demonstration was reported by foreign media outlets. The initial reports suggested the clashes between anti-riot police and demonstrators, using tear gas and batons to break up crowds who chanting anti-government slogans.

However, the Green Movement's leaders were supposed to be free after 14 February, but they are under house arresting till now. How the BBCPTV coverage the arresting of leaders is as follow:

➤ **Arrest of Opposition leaders at Discretion of Ayatollah Khamenei**

This news covers the arrest of the Green Movement's leader and their wives, emphasizes on the role of Supreme leader in this issue.

The current news released after the BBCPTV's interview with Karroubi's advisor. As he alleged, the leaders are arrested under Ayatollah Komeini's commend and accordance with his son's advice. Therefore, they have been transferred to Heshmatieh prison.

The presenter continues with a contradictory report from governmental Iranian news agencies:

- *Meanwhile, Fars News Agency, quoting an anonymous judiciary official, denied the arrest of Mousavi and Karroubi said that now they live in their homes and only their connections with suspicious are limited.*

And to complete this report the presenter referred to Mousavi's daughters' interview on Kalemeh site (depend to Green Movement):

- *Following the news, the children of Mousavi in a short interview with Kalemeh, denied the news based on the rejection of their parents arresting. They said we could only deny the arrest of our parents when we immediately see them in our parental home "without threat" or "security or military force" and in physical and mental health, as usual.*

And at the end attract the attentions to the statement of "Coordination Council of the Green Path of Hope" to demonstrate in support of the leaders and in protest to their freedom deprivation by security forces. Also the date and place of the rally are announced:

- *According to the statement, the march will hold on Tuesday (tomorrow), on 5 pm and from the Imam Hossein Square to Azadi Square in Tehran.*

### ➤ **Clerics Criticized Arrest of Opposition leaders**

Following the Green Movement's leaders' statement based on organizing the demonstration in support of popular movements in Tunisia and Egypt, on February 14, 2011 But in the morning of that day, the leaders were arrested by security forces. In

despite of the presence of security forces the demonstrators went to protests and slogans against the leader of the Islamic Republic, harshly.

And now the BBCPTV while explain the details referred to criticize by high-ranking clerics to arresting the opposites leaders. The presenter while names the name of them, tries to express all their interpretations of Islamic Republic behavior with the movement's leaders:

- *Ayatollah Yousef Sanei's statement published through his website on Sunday, he wrote that the behavior of the Iranian government is a sign of political helplessness and weakness. They afraid of public opinion.*

And adds:

- *Ayatollah Sanei said in his statement that the four without holding any court or tribunal (although informal) and any right to defend, are under the house arresting and deprivation of basic human rights. Ayatollah Bayat Zanjani, the other clerics and a critic of the government challenged the government for inappropriate treatment with who is known as "the loyal companions of the Imam and the revolution" for "mere protests." And he adds:*
- *How and on what basis, in these circumstances, instead of dealing with such people, the loyal companions of the Imam and the revolution, those who were fighting in the front line against the Shah's regime and spent holy war days with the best executive management, are now ignored?*

And in another paragraph refers to the Marja's letter to the Assembly of Experts with this theme:

- *The protests of opposite candidates, Mousavi and Karroubi, should be evaluated in a commission, trusted by two parties, ended immediately to illegal arrest of those honorable.*

Also the presenter refers to one of cleric who had comprised the current situation with before the revolution:

- *We have still not forgotten the political trials of the former regime, regardless of their unjust sentences and kangaroo court like military tribunals such as Dr. Mossadegh and “Fedayeen-e- Islam” and other dozens of political trials, we were witness of how the accused defend their thoughts which suggest the legal and judicial system.*
- *Mohammad Khatami also said on Saturday: “Why should people like Mr. Mousavi and Mr. Karroubi and their wives who are brilliant in the revolution and the Islamic Republic history, suffer limitation and restrictions? There is no doubt in “their attachment to the principle of revolution.”*

#### **4.2.6.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **House arrest of the leaders, direct discretion of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**

Arresting the movement’s leader by unofficial sentence and directly by the supreme leader’s order approved over judicial power of the Ayatollah Khamenei and his obvious struggle with the opposite leaders. Moreover confirm non-democratic structure of the system.

- **Coordination Council of the Green Path of Hope**

“The Green path of hope” as the name of the Green movement’s coordination council has a very positive connotation. Combining “greenness” and “hope” portrays a definite success.

- **Demonstration from the Imam Housein Square to Azadi Square in Tehran**

The rally from the Imam Housein square to Azadi could be referred to the innocence of Imam Housein that will ended to freedom and the glory of the oppressed.

- **The critical clerics of the government**

The critical clerics of the government which they are products of it, confirm fragility of the body of Islamic Republic.

- **Without holding any court or tribunal, any right to defend, unknown location, deprivation of basic human rights**

Combining these terms in related to arresting the Green Movement’s leader, suggest the injustice in the current ruling system, coupled with violation of human rights and freedom of speech as well.

- **Despite having all advertising and media power, political helplessness and weakness, afraid of public opinion**

Putting together these words shows nothing but the incapability of the system.

- **Compare the current situation with the Shah's court, regardless of their unjust sentences, let the accused to defend their thoughts which suggest the legal and judicial system**

Here is comparing the current system as an Islamic system that is founded by Islamic justice, with the pervious system as a monarchy system. And the result is to praise the non-Islamic government in respecting human rights.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

The BBCPTV always had worked toward to introduce Ayatollah Khamenei as the commander of the whole aftermath election's events. It seems from this report the desired goals are met. For an instant, the BBCPTV refers to these sentences in its report:

- *Mousavi and Karroubi were arrested, according to the discretion of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran,*
- *Ayatollah Khamenei told that the consultation in his office has shown that this action will not create any problem.*

On the other hand the BBCPTV intends to specify the movement leader's position politically and religiously with these sentences:

- *loyal companions of the Imam and the revolution*
- *those who were fighting on the front line against the Shah's regime*
- *Spent holy war days with executive management to the best*

- **Passive and active verbs**

Everything is clear and the reports are all in active form.



- **Antagonists and protagonist**

The story is ended with arresting the Green Movement's leader. No doubt the protagonists of the narrative are Mousavi and Karoubi, who has stood against injustice and oppression and Ayatollah Khamenei introduced as ruthless character.

#### **4.2.7.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The reports covered the 27 and 28 February and about two weeks after green Movement's arresting. The source of News is the BBC news and Iran's news agencies. The theme/subtheme is Green Movement and Islamic system that are still on top of the story. Dishonesty, injustice and incapacity of government that is coded by the legitimacy of the system is in central attention too. Democracy and violation of human rights are also highlighted in these reports.

The framing is based on illegal actions and injustice of the Islamic Republic that explain the arresting of the Green Movement's leaders and their wives. At the level of responsibility, the Iran's leader and his son are introduced by the BBCPTV. Since the leaders are products of the Islamic system, detention and keeping them in an unknown place, provoke the negative attitude toward the system, while most of the famous "*Marja*," as honorable person support them while condemning the perpetrators. It is noticeable that Ayatollah Khamenei and his son had been introduced as the commander of this issue. In fact, it confirms the deep division among Ayatollahs and the leaders of Islamic revolutions.

In the first part of the news the BBCPTV talk about the incertitude and the hesitation of the Head of judicial power, about the potential risks that threaten the system, and that he

was convinced with leader's scheme. It entirely approves the power and authority of the leadership in Iran. Everything is under his control and his order is obligatory for everyone.

While the news agencies depend on government reject the arresting the movement's leaders, the BBCPTV, quotes from the leader's daughters based on arresting their parents:

- *Mousavi's daughters said that we could only deny the arrest of our parents when we immediately see them in our parental home without the threat or security or military force in physical and mental health, as usual.*

It is approved by the BBCPTV that the leaders were arrested the day before the demonstration on February 14, and announce the statement of "Coordination Council of the Green Path of Hope," asking people for a demonstration in support of leaders and protest to their deprivation of liberty by security forces. Also the line of March is determined from "Imam Husein" to "Azadi" square.

As mentioned before, Imam Housein is a symbol of innocence in the religious beliefs of Iranian. He prefers to die than obey the unrighteous. Starting the rally from "Imam Housein" square has a political and religious connotation for the pro-Green Movements. It somehow referred to their trampled right. Ending the rally to "Azadi" is promising freedom and victory for oppressed people.

In another part, the BBCPTV covers the remarks of Ayatollah Sanei in details. He is one of the serious criticism of the Islamic Republic's functions after the 2009 election. According to the BBCPTV, he considered the governors' behavior with the opposites and movement's leader as political prostration and weakness and fear of public opinion.

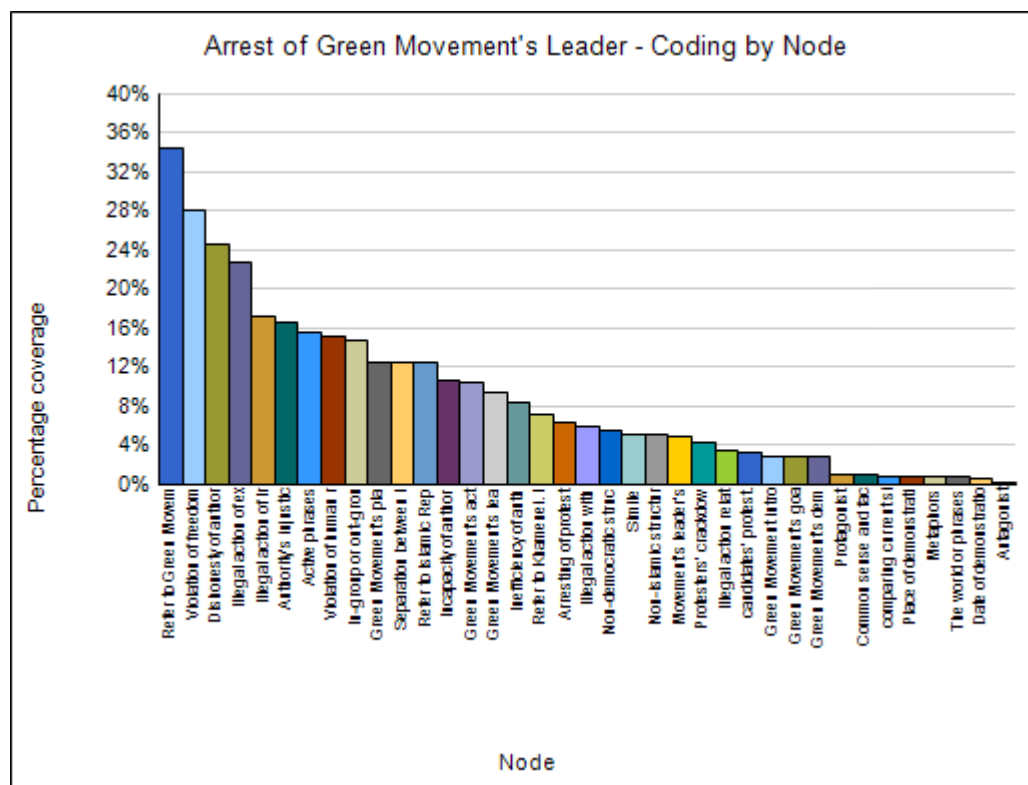
He also compared the freedom of speech and ideology in Islamic system with the previous monarchy system. He reminisced that even political activists were allowed to defend their thoughts at that “injustice courts.” This sentence by one of the cleric who has an important role in the 1979 revolution challenges the Islamic and religious identity of the Islamic Republic and political and religious legitimacy as well. Actually, it condemns the Islamic governors to the creation of political and social repression and violation of all human and civilian rights. He knows all the signs of weakness in spite of having a media in hand.

On the other part, the BBCPTV quoted the other clerics’ statement about the Mousavi and Karoubi as the collaborators of Imam Khomeini during the Islamic Republic and 8-year war between Iran and Iraq. They actually, denounced the government for inappropriate treatment with who has been known as the loyal companions of the Imam and the revolution for “mere protests.” And at the end they request for forming a commission to examine their charges and ask the authorities to end immediately, illegal arrest of those honorable.

Emphasizing on the Characters of the Green’s leader and their loyalties to Imam Khomeini and acknowledge by the Grand Ayatollahs, add up to their innocence as well as confirming injustice and inefficiency of authorities.

By the end of the news, the BBCPTV refers to the announcement, issued by “Coordination Council of the Green Path of Hope” in order to invite the Green Movement’s fans to demonstrate on 8<sup>th</sup> March, to protest against illegal imprisonment of leaders.

As it is indicated in table (4.7), the violation of freedom of speech is dedicated with more percentage of coding as well as dishonesty and illegal actions of Iran's authorities with Green Movement's leaders. Since the leaders raised out of the Islamic system, who were faithful to Iran's revolution and now the separation and widening divide among the clerics undermine the foundation of the Islamic system and its legitimacy which is highlighted in these news.



**Table 4.7: Arrest of leaders**

The next three programs are considered as a confirmation to all findings and would support our analysis. Although they are totally in different types, but would provide for illustrative of ambiguous points.

#### 4.2.7.3 Explanation level of Constructivism

Iran's government had announced its support of popular aspirations of millions of Tunisians and Egyptians who demanded an end to dictatorship. But when the green Movement's leader call for a demonstration in support of them, the Iranian authorities took the opposite position on this issue and tried to prevent the demonstration. What is obvious is that when Mousavi and Karoubi invited people to express their solidarity with the Egyptians and Tunisians that received welcome by many people, challenge the representative legitimacy of the government. The officials were soured that the pro-Green movement will have a great response to their leaders' invitation and pose another challenge to government after the officials alleged to quell them. As a matter of fact, the Green Movement identified as a legitimized movement and their leaders as the heroes who are popular among the people.

Another point in this news is stress on the role of "*Marja*" or clerics in Iran, by the BBCPTV. Basically, receiving support from Shiite clerics is traditionally one of the sources of political and religious legitimacy in Iran's history. For several decades, the clerical establishment has proven extremely effective at mobilizing the Iranians in any historical moments. And the prominent point is that one of the two leaders of the Green movement is also a clergyman that is in turn disputable factor of security threat. Ayatollah Karoubi was personal representative of Ayatollah Khomeini in many important organs. He was also speaker of parliament for two terms. Therefore, the Grand Ayatollahs' defense of the movement's leaders not only challenge the theocratic system but also it could be considered as a political threat.

Counting the Green leader's services after the 1979 revolution by the famous and popular clerics, displays the growing division among the clerical establishment that is the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this struggle also, the revolutionary and Islamic values have been raised again that in turn fuel the flame of dichotomy while they are affiliated with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini, the originator of the Islamic system and *Velayat-e-Faqih*.

The BBCPTV has been very successful to portray this contrast during the news coverage, especially with putting forward the Ayatollah Khomeini's thought via a very controversial program which is focused in the next part as "what is the Khomeini's legacy."

#### **4.2.8 What is Khomeini's legacy? (pargar)**

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, eventuated to replacement of Islamic Republic under the Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership with Pahlavi's dynasty. Actually, it was the replacement of pro-Western monarchy with an anti-Western authoritarian theocracy based on "*Velayat-e-Faqih*", Islamic values and democracy. Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran after years of exile with the support of various leftist and Islamic organizations and Iranian student movements. Every year on occasion of anniversary of Islamic revolution on 10<sup>th</sup> February, the Iranian reaffirm their allegiance to the causes of Islamic revolution and its founder Imam Khomeini.

After two years of unrests that lead to the growing division of Iran's governors and a large group of people, the BBCPTV provides a serious programs under the name of "Pargar." Actually, in these controversial programs, the BBCPTV challenges that Iran's

religious and political issues which are rooted in the contemporary history of Iran. This particular program which was aired one month before the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Islamic revolution. It was the first time that Iranians, especially the youth, have heard such a free-spoken and blunted words about the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini. This program was an interpretation of all events after the 2009 presidential election. Notably, it is replayed every year in occasion of Islamic revolution.

This program is a discussion panel that is about 50 minutes. The theme/subtheme is Green Movement, coupled with democracy and structural problems in Iran. Iran's Islamic system and legitimacy of the Islamic Republic is in central attention as well.

The presenter with concentration on Green Movement, emphasizes on the separation between the Iran's authorities who unanimously affiliate themselves to Ayatollah Khomeini's thoughts. Actually, this program tends to search the roots of current problems in foundation of Islamic Revolution.

The program starts with putting forward the complex question by the presenter:

- *After several decades, beyond the present political events, how the next generation reminisce of Ayatollah Khomeyni?*

And then tries to pointing out the contradictory statements of Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while making relations between the current events and his statements:

- *Each of two politic wings of the Islamic Republic of Iran, (Radicalisms and Reformists) involved in present events, attributes themselves to Ayatollah Khomeini. One part reminds his quote that "the people's votes is determinant"*

*and the other one mention that the “maintenance of the system is above all” and make it their model of behavior.”*

And continues:

- *The present topsy-turvy situation, after the controversial election, prevent acknowledge that which group is affiliated with Ayatollah Khomeini’s legacy. But for an observer who stand far from of this situation, it is not too difficult to recognize that which group’s spiritual father is Ayatollah Khomeini.*

*Briefly, the interpretation of Ayatollah Khomeini is the interpretation of Iran’s Revolution and every interpretation of Iran’s revolution is as an instruction and ground rule of what should be done and what not, in the present situation of Iran, in a word, we ask the guests, what is the Ayatollah Khomeini’s legacy?*

After presenting such a controversial issue, he asked the invitees to discuss about it. There are two platforms with two types of participants: at the first platform two specialists present their point of view about the topic and then two other participants plus with presenter, Mr. Karimi, asked the specialists their questions. During the discussion the presenter tries to follow impartially.

In this platform, Mr. Akbar Ganji<sup>36</sup> as a specialist, is asked to explain his point of view.

What is Ayatollah Khomeini’s heritage?

- *My perspective on this topic is, naturally, on the edge of democracy and human rights. Once, when Mr. Khomeini was in power, in the first decade of the revolution, in my opinion, he was a "Dictator." He never considered any value*

---

<sup>36</sup> . A supporter of the Islamic revolution as a youth, he became disenchanted in the mid-1990s and served time in Tehran’s Evin prison from 2001 to 2006 after publishing a series of stories on the murder of dissident authors known as the Chain Murder of Iran. Ganji has strongly supported the 2009 Iranian election protests. He staged a hunger strike outside of the United Nations headquarters in order to highlight the plight of Iranian political prisoners, and to bring international attention to the oppressive conditions felt within Iran.



*for democracy and for human right and freedom too. He tried to destroy even if there is a small percentage of them in society.*

He refers to “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” as the principal of Islamic system that founded by Ayatollah Khomeini:

- *For him Velayat-e Faqih and Islamic State were principals. It means that he changed the state of governance of God and repeated that “Islamic State could change all the basic percept of Islam like Prayer, Fast, and Haj and ...” and he has done. He did whatever nobody, “even the Kaffirs and unbelievers did not dare to do this.”*

He has also resurrected the Iran’s executions in 1989 and pointing out the human rights issue in Iran:

- *Mr. Khomeini believed that a guilty person who is wrongdoer has no need to have a lawyer and no need to curt. The court belongs to one who is not guilty. “Hoveyda”<sup>37</sup> and “Nasiri”<sup>38</sup> must be executed just due to they are “Hoveyda” and “Nasiri.” I have here the same sentences as a witness. He quoted that “it is against human rights if we do a trial for a person who commits an illegal act. According to human rights, we should have killed them upon arresting. Because they are guilty and it is clear that they are guilty. They executed all of them and “torture in prisons was institutionalized in this period.” And it ended to 89’s executions, executions of whom were sentenced to 2-3-5 or 10 years of even those unfair trials.*

---

<sup>37</sup> . Amir Abbas Hoveyda was an Iranian economist and politician who served as Prime Minister of Iran from 27 January 1965 to 7 August 1977. After the Iranian Revolution, he was tried by the newly established Revolutionary Court for “waging was against God” and “spreading corruption on earth,” and executed.

<sup>38</sup> . Nematollah Nassiri, was the director of SAVAK, the Iranian intelligence agency during the rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. He was executed by firing squad after a summary trial by the revolutionary in 1979.

He mentions the sources of his remarks with reference to the books, mentions the number of page and paragraph, exactly. And ended the first part with this sentence that:

- *It is clear enough in his letters, he has written “revolutionary sentence,” “revolutionary spirit”, “revolutionary hatred,” and “revolutionary revenge,” and so for him “maintenance of sovereignty” was as principal and killed thousands of people to keep it. And it was ok with him.*

In the next part the presenter asked the second specialist, Mr. Sadri, the psychologist and lecturer at Texas University, to give his opinion.

He starts his discussion with this sentence:

- *I agree with Mr. Ganji and add to him that Mr. Khomeini’s legacy spread to hostage issue and injuries that were imported to Iran. Iran-Iraq war and extrajudicial executions are all his heritage.*

But he continues that we couldn’t have a good judgment because we are still too close to this historic issue and continues by comparing the Islamic Revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini with Mao and Lenin:

- *We cannot see historic perspective because we are too near like a jungle that we can see only its trees. And for all damages and injuries occurred to us, either financial and physical or cultural damages, they are all as a veil on our common sense and feeling to prevent us not to have a good judgment. All which is said is right. It is true about Mao and Lenin too. They killed millions for their interests; and it is necessary for a revolution. But when we keep away and look at them with a historical distance, from French Revolution to Russian and China Revolution, and the Constitutional Revolution of Iran, we cannot*

*consider them the same. We cannot review all as an absolute failure. There are negative and positive points with them.*

His answer is too noticeable when he is asked by the presenter what the positive one are:

- *In my opinion, Iran's revolution, which Mr. Khomeini was on top of it, causes Iran's culture and civilization take a step forward. And it is "freedom of temptation of theocracy"; although religious intellectuals, both clergymen and non-clergy, had discouraged people from religious tyranny, but the common people couldn't accept it, because they had never felt it with their blood and flesh. Islam and Judaism have a common foundation, unlike Christianity, and that is a basic temptation of theocracy. Its witness is that God as a first person talk to believers in the Quran and Torah. But in the Gospel, a third person explains and narrates that Josses or Apostles do this and that. This temptation is in Islam and Judaism that lets God, who is omnipresent, governs you. Whatever intellectuals explained he cannot govern you and there are particular group who monopolized it and introduce themselves as a representative of God on earth and rule you, they couldn't believe it. Because it was an unopened cloth that smell pleasant and when the revolution occurred, people saw Mr. Khomeini and his fellowship like Beheshti, Khalkhali and Motahhari. So, we graduated from this university, bear all the problems. It has two outcomes after 30 years; first, the common people, who voted for the Islamic Republic of Iran, about % 98, now are sensitive to the word of "Referendum" and they won't do it again. And the second, Iran is the only Islamic country in which there is no Islamist mass movement in it. But the other countries registered in preschool of*

*what we graduated in. they are still in the idea that God could govern society, but we passed it.*

Indeed, his positive view of Islamic system was “Iranian wake up” after bitter experiences that Islamic Republic brought for them.

The second part of discussion is dedicated to inquiries of two other participants. The first one is Mrs. Kosar Gohari, student of law, who wears a scarf and during the discussion defends Ayatollah Khomeini’s thoughts and of course always defeated by Mr. Ganji. She criticizes Mr. Ganji for his interpretation of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” and receives this answer:

- *Velayat-e Faqih has not different interpretations. Mr. Khomeini has said it has absolute power as the same Prophet of Islam and it is authorized to change all the initial sentences. Now I want you have a democratic interpretation of it. Can you? Please tell me to teach me.*

And he again repeats the word of “dictator”:

- *He (Mr. Khomeini) even says in bilateral agreements, which constitution is included; there is no obligation for Valie-e Faqih to undertake the promises and keep it. So, when a person is able to nullify a bilateral contract unilaterally, what else we could name it except Dictator.*

And Mr. Sadri supports his opinion with adding these sentences:

- *I totally agree that for Mr. Khomeini maintenance of System was an essential and for this reason allowed himself to have an incorrect judgment, but in Iran’s cultural experience framework and Islamic civilization with the temptation of theocracy, it has a positive result.*

The next inquirer, who graduates in financial economics, expresses his opinion that to confirm Mr. Ganji's statements:

- *When we talk about the role of a person for instance "Karol Marx" who has a theory, we could discuss and investigate about the different interpretations of his theory. But when we discuss about Mr. Khomeini, we have the recorded actions. He was a charismatic leader, who has been able to mobilize people for a common target and he succeeded in 1979 and has been Iran's leader for 10 years. Therefore, we have a record of his performance not only his theories. Accordingly, it is better to judge him according to his behaviors.*

Continuing the discussion, again, Mrs. Gohari, who live in USA talk about her experiences in contrary with Mr. Sadri:

- *When I came to America, I found that most of people who have experience of those years, were happy due to know another face of Islam and the role that individuals could have in their destiny as a revolutionary and religious person. Actually, they are pleasant to take these steps.*

Here the presenter takes this opportunity to redirect the discussion and continues:

- *This is an important point that I would like Mr. Ganji is answering it. It is said Mr. Khomeini used the same discourse which Shariati already had used and revived revolutionary man. If we look at it on a broader scale, it is positive; because the Muslims around the world realize that they are able to make a big change with a little equipment and limited material. Do you think it is rises from Khomeini's character?*

And Mr. Ganji restates his word:

- *See, Political Islam has been having too much cost for both Islam and Iranian. Mr. Khomeini's interpretation of Islam was not, but defames of Islam and hurting it. The fundamentalism that he was its crier has no advantage for Islam and Iranian nation. How we can ignore it? They killed hundreds of thousands of their people. Every day in 1989 we saw in Keyhan and other newspapers, hundreds of people were executed. What they killed were human being.*

Mrs. Gohari that seems is not convinced with this sentences reminds Mr. Ganji that considers the context:

- *I think in 1979 the concept of democracy was too different from what we know about it now. It is too wrong to evaluate Mr. Khomeini in 1979 with our criterions of democracy or evaluate about 1989's events with such a criteria. Not only Mr. Khomeini, but also even Kennedy or Martin Luther and any political figures are not ponderable with such criteria. We have to look at their context. We cannot say only he executed opposites; our concept of democracy and human rights is too different now.*

And Mr.Ganji answers here:

- *In the word of sociologists, context is important for understanding of action. The context never changes the right to wrong or vice versa. The context told us in a special duration of Iran's history, revolutionary discourse was dominated; I have written it in different articles more than 10 times that there was not democratic and human rights' discourse on that time. Mr. Khomeini belongs at that time; but considering these issues never justify the crime.*

And after some discussion about the revolutionary fever and ant-imperialism movements among the youth, Mr. Ganji attracts the attentions again to the topic:

- *In my opinion our discussion is about Ayatollah Khomeini and his legacy. Don't change the topic. I, for me, know it's negative. He is founder of lying, which he called it a religious duty. No other Faqih has told it. He has said for maintenance of state, lying is a religious duty and other things like spying. You can kill person for this reason. They are all Ayatollah Khomeini's achievements.*

In continuing Mr. Najafi explains his point of view about the first sentences of presenter based on attributes of different parties to Ayatollah Khomeini:

- *I want to point to Iran's present issues and political conditions; which every group and party attribute themselves to Ayatollah Khomeini. As Mr. Ganji said before, due to limitation of activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran's framework, they have to attribute themselves to higher authority, that is Ayatollah Khomeini and as you said they are not reaching to post-Khomeini's era yet.*

And the presenter seizes the occasion to ask a very significant question for Mr. Sadri:

- *Please explain, as a psychologist, who knows Iran, when Iran's society and its discourse could pass from Khomeini's thought?*

And Mr. Sadri answers by the important sentences:

- *In my opinion, we have passed it with Green Movement. We couldn't pass it with Reformist Movement, at least in theory. When a former prime minister and a former speaker of Iran's parliament, both demanding reform of constitution*

*according to people willing, it means we have passed from Islamic Republic of Iran's achievements and ready for another system without theocracy.*

#### **4.2.8.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **The maintenance of the system is above all, people's vote is determinative**

Putting together two historic remarks of Ayatollah Khomeini that are referred to two concepts of dictatorship and democracy in Iran's government. The BBCPTV considers these two concepts as a root of divisions and source of different behaviors among Islamic rulers. On the other hand, it shows the ambiguity in Ayatollah Khomeini's thoughts.

- **He was a Dictator, he never considers any value for democracy and for human right and freedom too, torturing the prisoners, execution of 1988.**

The terms like Dictator, violation of human rights and freedom of speech, torturing and execution in Iran were familiar with Iranians after the 2009 election. Addressing the founder of the Islamic Republic with such a word draw audiences' attentions to roots of current sociopolitical anti-norms, which is introduced by the BBCPTV under the title of "Ayatollah Khomeini's legacy."

- **Religion is a toy in their hand, which can change "Halal" to "Haram" and vice versa.**

Considering religion as an object to play with public beliefs just for personal interests have no interpret just kidding and seducing the people.



- **revolutionary sentence, revolutionary spirit, revolutionary hatred, and revolutionary revenge**

All these concepts pictures peoples feeling in the first days of the revolution in 1979, and somehow revealed the abusing of these feelings by revolutionaries.

- **Mao and Lenin also killed millions for their interests, it is necessary for a revolution**

Comparing Ayatollah Khomeini with Mao and Lenin, who killed millions for their personal goals is extremely irrelevant comparison, neither in ideology nor in goals.

- **Khomeini's legacy is freedom of temptation of theocracy, it was an unopened cloth that smells pleasant.**

Putting forward the Ayatollah Khomeini's legacy in positive sentences with negative connotation. Freedom of temptation of theocracy considered as a positive point of the Islamic revolution that caused Iranian to experience what they thought, for years, would be remedial for their pains. And now it is unfolded and never appeal to it.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

The BBCPTV in this program focuses on Ayatollah Khomeini's character as the founder of Islamic Republic and search the roots of current social and political problems in foundation of the Islamic system by who resorted to Islam just to advance his dictatorship goals:

- *Maintenance of system is above all*
- *He was a dictator.*
- *He never considered any value for democracy and human right and freedom too. He tried to destroy even if there is a small percentage of them in society.*

- *He believed Islamic State could change all the basic percept of Islam like prayer, fast and Haj.*
- *Religion is a toy in their hand, which can change “Halal” to “Haram” and vice versa.*
- *Torture has a special place in this system.*
- *He believed that a guilty person who is wrongdoer has no need to lawyer and no need to curt. The court belongs to one who is not guilty.*
- *The opposites were executed and torture was institutionalized in this period.*
- *Khomeini’s legacy spread to hostage issue and injuries that were imported to Iran.*
- *Iran-Iraq war and extrajudicial executions are all his heritage*
- *Velayat-e Faqih has not different interpretations. Mr. Khomeini has said it has absolute power as the same Prophet of Islam and it is authorized to change all the initial sentences*

- **Passive and active verbs**

Most of verbs are in active forms, without any ambiguous.

- **Antagonists and protagonists**

The antagonist of the story is specifically Ayatollah Khomeini, who is introduced in this program as a dictator in clerical garb.

#### **4.2.8.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

Daryoush Karimi, host and producer of “Pargar” in BBCPTV, has started his work since May 2010. This program is broadcast for 3 times on weekdays. First on Monday at

24, and replay once more on Friday at 16 and again on Saturday at 21 pm. More than 100 programs have been broadcast during the 6 years. It is a professional platform for professional discussions with special guests, invited to discuss in two panels.

The studio is in red color and the invitees sit in front of each other. They are mostly known figure for Iranians, who didn't live in Iran due to their political or social activities. On one hand the type of program and discussions, and on the other hand strong performance of Mr.Karimi, who challenge the invitees, besides the selected interesting topics of conversation, increase the attractiveness of the debates, particularly for the young people who have never had any experience of revolution or any historical events.

Most of the subjects matter are selected based on current hot issues or on the occasion of Iran's historical events. For instance the selected topic for discussing in this section is broadcast on the occasion of anniversary of Iran's Islamic Republic on 1979.

In this discussion the Islamic Republic is framed as a dictatorship system which there is no track of democracy and more important, no track of Islam. In this system, the authorities are allowed to do everything to keep the system alive. Whereas, killing people will be normal when we back to the Islamic Republic's foundation. In this framing, the addresses is just a spectator of the terrible face of Islamic system that are responsible for all current calamities.

At the beginning the program, the presenter with a very strong introduction, draw attention to the division among Iranian authorities who are affiliated with Ayatollah Khomeini's thoughts and immediately refers it to the verbal contradiction of Ayatollah Khomeini. He tend to find not only the roots of disagreements in Ayatollah Khomeini,

but also display originate of sociopolitical problems and recent indecent behavior with opposites in his statements.

The presenter put forward, two remarks quoted by Ayatollah Khomeini: “People’s vote is determinate” and “maintenance of Islamic system is above all”, one rooted in democracy and the other suggest dictatorship. The first provides a system of government by the people and their elected representative and the second confirm any action against people to protect the system even killing the opposites.

The invited experts to this program are Akbar Ganji<sup>39</sup> and Mahmoud Sadri. Akbar Ganji is known as Iran’s preeminent political dissident. He strongly supports the Green movement and do his best to attract international attention to what was going in Iran after the 2009 election. Mahmoud Sadri is also Iranian psychologist and lecturer in Texas University.

In the second panel the invited guests are Kosar Gohari, law student, and Amir Housein Najafi graduated in finance. They are supposed to challenge the experts with their questions. Indeed, with this policy the BBCPTV provide its neutrality and the presenter, Darush Karimi just conduct the discussion. He initiates the discussion with this controversial question: “what is Rohollah Khomeini’s legacy?”

This question is answered in two points of view, Ganji from the perspective of human right and democracy and Sadri have a psychological opinion on this subject. Ganji has a sharp negative outlook at the Ayatollah Khomeini’s thoughts and his legacy and Sadri has a positive interpretation of the Islamic revolution and its founder but with negative connotation.

---

<sup>39</sup> . He was supporter of the Islamic revolution when he was young and but changed his mind and served time in Tehran’s Evin Prison from 2001 to 2006 after publishing a series of stories on the murder of dissident authors known as the Chain Murder of Iran.

Akbar Ganji attributed Ayatollah, to dictatorship behavior and violator of human rights. He also presents the evidence to confirm his words. He repeatedly refers to 1988 mass execution in Iran under the command of Ayatollah Khomeini. He knows “*Veleyet-e-Faqih*” that is a foundation of the Islamic Republic, as a weapon for absolute dominants of the supreme leader or *Faqih*, on the custodianship of people in all aspects of their life. He says that “people vote is determinant” is only a legend.

In this part Ganji explains the process of configuration of “*Veleyat-e-Faqih*” by Ayatollah Khomeini in details. He tends to transfer a kind of seduction and deceit by Ayatollah Khomeini to audiences when he raised the “*Velayat-e-Faqih*”. According to him, Ayatollah Khomeini came to power with the slogan of an Islamic state which is bound to the enforcement of Islamic law. But after a while he changed his mind and set the Islamic state equal with the rule of God and *Faqih* is his successor on earth who is able to do whatever he will. Therefore, he is allowed to change the Islamic law and the constitution, unilaterally, and change Halal to Haram and vice versa.

Halal and Haram refer to any object or action which is permissible or forbidden according to Islamic law and Sharia that define morality of action in Islam and are unchangeable. But according to Ganji Ayatollah Khomeini has this ability to manipulate these rules that nobody dare do till that time.

He repeatedly refers to 1988 execution as an obvious crime under the direct command of Ayatollah Khomeini and killing thousands of political prisoners. He refers also to the Ayatollah Khomeini’s immoral mindset that support mass execution. Holding trial for the sinners, according to his logic, was against human rights and they must be executed immediately upon their arresting.

All things considered Akbar Ganji knows lying, spying, killing and torturing the opposites, violation of human rights and freedom of speech and religious tyranny is all Khomeini's legacy to all his followers that its reflection is obvious in the aftermath of the 2009 election.

In the second part Sadri was asked to explain his opinion. He confirmed what was reviewed by Ganji about Ayatollah Khomeini's character and actions. Furthermore, he added some points like Iran's hostage crisis in 1979 and 8-year Iran-Iraq war as his legacy as well. But he has an interesting interpretation of Islamic revolution and knows it as a triumph with positive results for the Iranian. In his opinion Iran is the first Islamic country which has been released from the temptation of theocracy, however, the Iranians have to suffer many injustices in this way.

Regarding Iran's controversial history, it has been always between peculiar temptations of religious people, who stand for theocracy and democracy. Sadri takes the Islamic revolution as a positive point that the religious people found the damages that are associated with an Islamic state.

He also compares Ayatollah Khomeini's character with Mao and Lenin, who caused the killing of thousands just for their goals. He adds that destruction and killings are necessary for every revolution. Indeed, for him the end justifies the means, even the goal is the establishment of the Islamic state. In fact, he believes that religion cannot prevent the leaders from illegal actions and it is only as a means of social control for political goals.

Gohari, a young student who grows up in abroad, during the program tries to connive Ganji to consider the dominant context of the first years of revolution and the other

positive points in Ayatollah Khomeini's functions, but she is overcome by Ganji who couldn't find any justify for killing innocent persons in any context and anytime.

The noticeable point is that she, in the position of supporting Ayatollah Khomeini, consciously or unconsciously, points out his historical speech in Beheshte Zahra cemetery, upon his entrance to Iran that is censored by Iran's TV. Ayatollah Khomeini in his remarks on that day, has not only branded the Shah's government illegal, but also emphasize on the sovereignty of the people in their destiny. He also made some other promises that all failed to act. Every year, on occasion of anniversary of Islamic revolution his speech is broadcast by Iran's state TV, but his promise is censored.

Another guest suggests to consider Ayatollah Khomeini's actions and behaviors instead of his thoughts. In his opinion, he was a charismatic leader, who has been able to mobilize people for a common target and he succeeded in 1979 and was Iran's leader for 10 years. Therefore, we have a record of his performance not only his theories.

The objective results of Ayatollah Khomeini are assessed positively by Sadri that refers to his unwanted actions like renewing the process of secularization. Moreover, he has an international heritage which has a special place in anti-Imperialism struggles and the other one is the foundation of the Islamic State in Iran which is ended to our graduation from this university. And, it is added by the presenter that after the Islamic revolution, the Muslims around the world realize that they are able to make a big change with a little equipment and limited material. But Ganji once again draws attention to execution of thousands of people and that defamation of Islam by Ayatollah Khomeini's behaviors. He again count his legacy with these words:

- *He is founder of lying, which he called it a religious duty. No other Faqih has told it. He has said for maintenance of state, lying is a religious duty and other things like spying. You can kill person for this reason. They are all Ayatollah Khomeini's achievements. This is my strong convenience, and there is no doubt, that we must consider Mr. Khomeini in a whole. But I think it makes nothing better, but worst.*

Ayatollah Khomeini is introduced as a charismatic leader who was clever enough to get on current dominant discourse, created by religious intellectuals like Shariati. Independence and social justice were two main dominant concepts that Ayatollah Khomeini associated them with a fever of revolution to establish the Islamic state and after authorizing, showed the book, on “*Velayat-e-Faqih*”, which had hidden behind. Due to emphasize on his charismatic personality, Sadri explains that it has never confirmed his goodness, we have both, negative and positive charismatic leaders.

At the end, Karimi, the presenter asks an important question that the answer was what the BBCPTV planned to reach. He poses his question with this sentences:

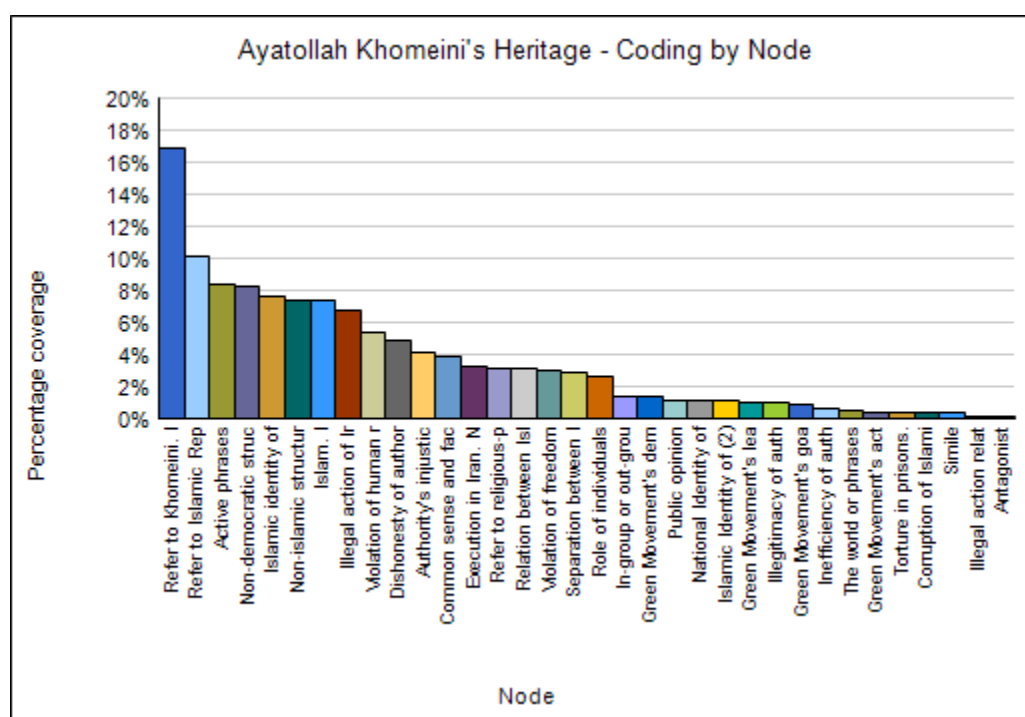
- *Ayatollah Khomeini's shadow is still felt on Iran's political discourse. Why in post-Khomeini, Iran's political discourse, which is not Islamic, cannot come out of this shadow and when it happens?*

Ganji refers to current events and explain asking for freedom and democracy and separation of religion from politics is not Khomeini's discourse any more. Actually he believes that the Green movement pave the way for admission of democracy and freedom of speech. Also Sadri recognizes the Green movement as a turning point that left behind Khomeini's thoughts. He refers to the Green movement's leader and said:



- *When a former prime minister and a former speaker of Iran's parliament, both demanding reform of constitution according to people willing, it means we have passed from Islamic Republic of Iran's achievements and ready for another system without theocracy.*

Displaying leader of the revolution as a dictator, murder, trickster, who claimed to enforce Islamic law, not only undermines the legitimacy of the government, but also provoke a sense of hate among those getting ready to celebrate their victory against Royal despotism.



**Table 4.8: Ayatollah Khomeini's heritage**

What is obvious in this program, the foundation of the Islamic Republic and more prominent, "Velayat-e-Faqih" is targeted by this discussion. Non-democratic and non-Islamic structure of Islamic Republic, based on table (4.8), are attracting the attention

more than everything. Refer to executions in 1989 and injustice and consequent violation of human rights is coded with noticeable percentage.

Dishonesty, illegal actions by Iran's authorities as well as unpleasant and nasty face of Islam is understood from the discussion while it is referred to Ayatollah Khomeini's remark that "maintenance of the system is above all" and even killing is allowed. And at the end the Green Movement is found as a termination of all that is called "Khomeini's legacy."

#### **4.2.8.3 Explanation of Construction of Identity and Norms**

No doubt the Islamic revolution in Iran was a very particular movement with exclusive criteria and ideology. Talk over this revolution is tantamount to swimming in an endless ocean. But what is obvious is its attachment to Islam and religious. It was attempted against dictatorship, authoritarianism and the interference of foreign power. Ayatollah Khomeini, the indisputable leader of the revolution, counted progressive goals for the Revolution and turn himself as the leader for all groups who were anti-colonial and anti-authoritarian and pro-democracy, rather than a purely religious leader. The establishment of the Islamic Republic led to monopolization of the political power and the concept of "*Velayat-e Faqih*" by Ayatollah Khomeini who propounded the view that there should be no distinction between religion and government in an Islamic state.

Definitely, every revolution involves a lot of struggles and confrontation that eventuated in loss of life and many other hardships, but its aspiration of positive results empowered the revolutionaries for the years of struggle and sacrifice. They thought that the Islamic system is the only guarantee of freedom and justice in the country. And now after more

than three decades of gaining bitter political and social experiences, internally and internationally, the young generation wants to know about the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and their Islamic identity which their fathers brought for them.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Islamic revolution and exactly when Iran is struggling with serious political problems after the 2009 election, the BBCPTV had decided to introduce the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this program, the executives of the BBC, with all the subtlety, not only assassinate Ayatollah Khomeini's character, but also tries to introduce him as a principal offender of the whole unrests and violation after the 2009 election.

Evidently, the leaders of the Green Movement are the production of the Islamic Republic, but despite of their dissident with the concept of "*Velayat-e-Faqih*", never declare acquaintance of revolution's values and its founder, Ayatollah Khomeini. They always remark their affiliate with Ayatollah Khomeini and his goals. On the other hand, Iran's authorities also affiliate themselves with Ayatollah Khomeini and ideology and goals of revolution as well. And notably they accused each other to disobeying the Ayatollah Khomeini and getting away from the values of the revolution.

It appears as an excellent topic for the BBCPTV to solve the puzzle of disputing among Iran's authorities. Putting together two historical statements of Ayatollah Khomeini seems to be a good help to find the root of division, while attempt to rootless the Islamic identity, religious and political legitimacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Which one is Khomeini's legacy, "the maintenance of the system is above all" or "people vote is determinant"?

“Acceptability” and “legitimacy” of the Islamic system are dual meaning in Ayatollah Khomeini’s thoughts. Some experts believe that for him, the “legitimacy” of the government comes out of enforcement of religious texts and Islamic law and people has no any role in this regard but they could help to establish this Islamic system. The concept of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*” support these thoughts that is in some exegesis raise out of hos non-democratic thoughts. But there is another commentary that approves “acceptability” has a special place in Ayatollah Khomeini’s thoughts. Considering “people’s vote is determinant” suggest his believing in the pivotal role of people in both, establishment and maintenance of the Islamic system. He also has another statement that shows his democratic views on cooperation of people and government, like: “I will determine the government with national support.”

What is indisputable is that Ayatollah Khomeini not only considered religion and politics as an inseparable element of the country’s political structure, but also the religion have the excellence place in his belief. It could be justified by his underscore the role of Islamic jurist or *Faghih* in government and foundation of the clerical establishment. It is natural that within this system the common people’s role is insignificant due to their unfamiliarity with Islamic sentences. Therefore, the people only are able to support their reliable religious leaders those who are decision-making in politics arena too. Ayatollah Khomeini repeatedly remarks this sentence that “Our politics is our religion and our religion is our politics.”

Taking everything into account, “people’s vote is determinant” is spontaneously cancelled, when everything is under the control of “*Velayat-e-Faqih*”. It is not trouble making since the vote of the people is in line with their religious and political leaders.

But the 2009 election was a turning point that unfolds the opposition of the young generation of Iran against the *Velayat-e-Faqih*'s conviction. Actually, the green movement is a religious reformist intellectuals' movement that under the name of Islam denied legitimacy to the theocracy of the "*Velayat-e-Faqih*". The important point is that they constantly show themselves adhere to revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini's thoughts.

In incredible and unforgettable scenes following the 2009 election on the streets of Iran, we have witnessed a struggle far greater than a mere political contest between different presidential candidates. We were witness of struggling to build a new identity for the Iranian people.

The BBCPTV with the production of this program and introducing the leader of the Islamic revolution and his thoughts, indeed, encourages the opposites, specially the youth, to continue their dissidents with the leaders who "the maintenance of the system is above all" for them.

At the end The BBCPTV knows the Green Movement the emancipation of the Ayatollah Khomeini's legacy which has brought nothing expect injustice, violation of human rights, duplicity and asperity.

#### **4.2.9 Who Are the Plain clothes? (pargar)**

The protests after the 2009 election have been the most serious challenge to the Islamic Republic after the 1979 Islamic revolution that ended to the downfall of the Shah. Ayatollah Khamenei warned opposition leaders to give up the street riots or be

held responsible for any bloodshed or dire consequences to come, however labeled the unrest as foreign enemy meddling.

After the supreme leader's ultimatum, the protests enter into new phase. Death of Neda Agha Soltan and scores of others suggest the seriousness of government in a crackdown on the protestors. From this time onward the name of "*Basij*" and "plain clothes" has been associated with every clashes and death reports. It seemed that the government had decided to rely increasingly on the state force, whose number were estimated more than 100,000 in Tehran alone.

For more information *Basij* resistance force or the "Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed" is a paramilitary volunteer, founded in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini. The *Basij* force receive their orders from Iranian Revolutionary guard and the current supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Membership in this organization is voluntary and shows their loyalty to Supreme leader and Islamic revolution's values. The role of *Basij* during the Iran-Iraq war was more prominent. More than 700.000 *Basij* volunteers were sent to the front when self-devotion and martyrdom was the virtual value of the Islamic revolution.

In the aftermath of the presidential election and existence of street riots and demonstrations by the Green Movement's fan, what was more highlighted by national and international news agencies, was the anti-riot police tactic to control or clash with protestors. During the unsettled situation in Iran hundreds of people were killed or wounded that "Basij" forces and "plain clothes" are identified as the main cause of these incidents. Voluntary membership in this organization causes that they were considered as social base rather governmental base. In many cases during the clashes between

opposites and *Basij* force, the government has rejected their governmental mission and addressed them as “overconfident persons.”

In this program the BBCPTV attempts to reveal the *Basij* and plain clothes base in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Daryoush Karimi as the presenter of this discussion panel, put forward the topic, with referring to some historical background of plainclothes’ activities in Iran and tries to prepare the audiences’ mind for a serious discussion with some questions:

- *Spattering paint on Karobi’s house and attack on Khatamiy’s father’s tomb, are not common political functions. Maybe the threat to bombard the parliament wasn’t an ordinary action too; but “attack to people with a stick is a familiar and common treatment in Iran.” The groups, who do such behave are called plainclothes. There is something hidden in this word that they are security force, but not dress in secured form. Is this means that they have an absolute political security function? Are they representative of a special level of society? In another word, whether we talk about a small organized group, who are on the scene whenever they are needed or they are the representative of a social rooted group and distinguished level. We are going to ask our guests, what is the relation between them and the authorized clerics in Iran? Do they owe this group or they dominate and control them or afraid of them?*

Then he introduces the invitees in two panels. At first panel, Mr. Mehrdad Darvishpour, lecturer of sociology at Stockholm University and Mr. Hamed Yousefi, as researcher of Islamic culture. And at the second panel, their addressers, Mrs. Asadi, graduated in Banking and Mr. Parvizi, film maker are participating in this program.

The discussion starts with Darvishpour's point of view:

- *At the first years of revolution, police force which were the official force for suppressing, were known as a social group, but today, I think it is an organized group; actually totalitarian regime contained of a group which is mixed of intellectuals and a group, called hooligans. It means that a group of the deprived people, who sometimes are called lumpen, that have no power and social position, but tried to approve their fidelity to the Ideology of totalitarian regime by eliminating its enemies.*

Of course he explains that it is not just in Iran and they exist in all totalitarian regimes:

- *Totalitarian regime needs them to hide their suppression behind them and make believe and pretend they have mass based. Today, that Islamic Republic of Iran has faced abscission of its body, the plainclothes are more organized than before, who organized by the government and never act spontaneously.*

The second analyzer, Mr. Yousefi with refer to street riots after election tell that they do not belong to a specific class of people and they must identity in relation to ruling power in Iran. He answers when he is asked what makes them connected:

- *There is a complexity in Iran's authorities' power. One of the factors is theosophy and mysticism. It means that one of discourse which defines power politically is theosophy discourse. One thing which most of intellectuals believe, is that they think mysticism just stylized community. It is absolutely wrong. The theosophy is discourse power by itself, historically. Theosophy in Iran, in the past era, has formed a group in margin of power, who were called Chivalrous. Fata or chivalrous are on one side attributed to Hazrat Ali, that treat like him*



*and do pleasant, exactly like what we have in mind as a Basij. And on the other side gradually during the history, these so-called chivalries tend to be the center of power which actually have the Mystical ruling central power and support it. And now, in Iran's structure of the political system we are again witnessing of this formation with the difference that they are related to government and there is an institution which support them; they are not belonging to the deprived, however, act as them, like Hazrate Ali, who you can't say he was poor due to his wealth and properties.*

And the presenter asks Mr.Darvishpour to expose his point of view in this matter. He mentions that “Fata” and “Basij” and plain clothes are not comparable because they are mutually exclusive.

- *Maybe we could talk about a large social group in the first years of the revolution, who act self-motivated, but now in this era we could never say such a thing. One clear reason is that all demonstrations of Green Movement, which was really self-motivated, sometimes they were interdicted by public figure but they do demonstrates. It means that there was a self-motivation among them. But the plainclothes acted in response to them and they were armed with pistols and it shows they are an organized group.*

And the presenter says:

- *It means you consider a political identity instead of social identity for them.*

And Mr. Darvishpur replies, exactly.

Mrs. Asadi, in the second panel poses a very important question:

- *I would like to point out a matter. If we back to the source and origin of Stick holders, where do we reach? Is there only religious factor which motivate them or material incentives cause their appearance? But if we ignore these two motivations, there is another issue, called poverty of identity. When a 15 year boy, who live in low-class and poor family and when he is not regarded in his class, and with an entrance to Basij find a new identity and take a good social position, so, maybe the material incentives will not be his motivation any more.*

From now on, the discussion is focused on lack of identity of the plainclothes and Basij force. Mr. Darvishpour emphasizes again that it is common in even western countries. He believes that when the youth who are pushed to the margin of society, gain the identity by joining with a group, they encourage to join.

- *If you look at whole the historic samples, you find that these deprived levels are more attracted by the ideology of totalitarian regimes. Because at the first step, gives them identity, in the society which haven't any identity.*

And he immediately attract attention to the difference between the plain clothes and self-motivated groups that were the foundation of revolution and the plain clothes' actions in the aftermath of the 2009 election.

- *I would like to say that regarding the current situation in Iran and reduction of Islamic Republic's body, especially when Green Movement happened, they are more organized than social self-motivated one. There are many samples after the revolution that government was not able to control and support them, but when force groups come in front of parliament and slogan against parliament, are*

*they self-motivated? I can't believe it. I think Sepah<sup>40</sup> and Ahmadinejad's group were involved in such events. They take it as a tool to advance their political targets.*

And Mr. Yousefi draw attention to Veleyat-e-Fagqih and its theosophy power to attract people that was in a high level in Ayatollah Khomeini's character. He actually wants to explain the different between the plain clothes, during and after the revolution. He completes his remarks with this sentence:

- *When we look at the banners in hands of plain clothes, in different events, we can see some sentence that somehow indicative of devotion. Devotion is in theosophy's category. It means you give up all your properties and give over yourself and all possessions of power to a superpower. It is a complex speech that has a long story in Iran; and this is what makes Iran differ from other totalitarian regimes which have a common trait that is hidden behind plainclothes to exert their power.*

Mr. Darvishpour says in reply:

- *Devotion" is not just because of theosophy. All the totalitarian regimes' ideology from Stalinism, Maoism, Hitler's Fascist to Italian Fascist and even Peronism in Argentina and some other like Islamic fundamentalism in Iran have such faithfulness and devotion to the charismatic leader and it is not particularly in mysticism. The second point is that the pressure force in Iran is more organized than you think. I cannot believe that plainclothes act independently and separate from state.*

---

<sup>40</sup> . The Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution.

The presenter back again to Identity issue and the plainclothes' poverty identity and that they are mostly marginalized. He asks what the relation is between their social position and what they are doing. And Mr. Yousefi answers:

- *It creates a kind of sense of revenge. This sense and feeling could be misused in some stage by states, like rises of Hitler. It is the same in the aftermath of the election in Iran.*

The discussion proceeds with trying to find social base if any, for the plainclothes and the presenter points it out in another aspect:

- *During the TV debates of presidential candidates and peaceful street arguments or in the other word, street celebration, this group or the plainclothes joined the events and didn't show any violence till the specific situation. Does it indicate that they are a group who act according to the current situation? Where were them during the election?*

Mr. Yousefi still insists on their social base and unorganized form of plainclothes and explain it in psychological form:

- *A psychologist analyzing could be helpful here. You have two social groups with two different instincts; one with life instinct whom you called Greens and are Mousavi's fan, and the other one go ahead with aggression nature. During before and after of election's events, they differ in a range of activities; the first group shows their feeling with dance and happiness, with a high self-motivation, and the second just wanted to pull over the others with aggression. Immediately after election, the second group was able to show its aggression more explicit.*

*As you know, aggression has different levels, the first level was before the election and there was no reason to show it to stick.*

With this approach Mr. Parvizi, in the second panel, concludes that the plain clothes are among people and it is their tactic to act in appropriate time. And he refers to “Taghieh”<sup>41</sup> in Islam that is a kind of tactic.

And at the end, the discussion is finished to the point that the plainclothes who were known under the title of “Basij” are an organized group. Their act is determined by their affiliate with various part of government.

#### **4.2.9.1 Description level**

- **Attack to people with stick is a familiar and common treatment in Iran.**

Expressing this sentence by the presenter at the beginning of the program as an introduction, reminds for their audiences the turbulent history of Iran, no matter before or after the 1979 revolution that is full of roughness.

- **Totalitarian regime, the hooligans, the deprived, lumpen, have no power and social position, they try to approve their fidelity to the Ideology of totalitarian regime by eliminating its enemies, totalitarian regime hides their suppression behind them, plainclothes are a part of repression organization. If we play it down, it means we believe most of these repressions were self-motivated.**

Denoting Iran as a Totalitarian regime that ruling group has complete control over everyone, reminiscent Joseph Stalin or Mussolini and Adolf Hitler who are famous for

---

<sup>41</sup> . It is a form of Islamic dissimulation or a legal dispensation whereby a believing individual can deny their faith or commit otherwise illegal or blasphemous acts while they are in fear or at risk of significant persecution.

their venality. Actually the terms of plain clothes are identified with totalitarian regimes. They are introduced in this program as the hooligans who suffer from lack of identity and were identified by these regimes.

- **Imam Ali, Basij, Theosophy, Chivalrous. Fata**

On another part of the program the word of “Basij”, not plainclothes, is aligned with Fata and Chivalrous who are affected by their Imam, Hazrat Ali, and theosophy power. Imam Ali, the first Shia Imam has a special place in the religious cultural of Iranian. He is known due to his simple life and characteristics of Chivalry. Comparing Basij with him refers to their religious beliefs, however, their act is controlled by the Iran’s authorities.

- **SAVAK, plainclothes**

SAVAK was the secret police, national security and intelligence organization established by Mohammad Reza Shah. Name of SAVAK always has been associated with horror and brutality for Iranians. It is reminded as the last resort for the Shah at the end of his monarchy, to crack down protestors when the military force doesn’t work more.

- **Green Movement as a self-motivated movement with social identity, the plainclothes armed with pistols and it shows they are organized, political identity.**

Referring to Green Movement with a social base against plainclothes with political identity and governmental base regarding their military equipment.

- **Religious factor against material incentives**

Putting forward the serious issues in evaluation the motivation factors for plainclothes action. The first indicates the origins of faith and self-motivation of a social class with social base, and the other shows dependency of a group with non-social base.

- **Marginalization, poverty Identity, personal crisis, sense of revenge**

Considering marginalization as a main factor to justify the plainclothes actions. Actually marginalization is the social disadvantage and relegated to the fringe of society which bring up a sense of revenge and personal crisis for whom live in the vicinity of wealth and fortune. Combining “personal crisis” and “lack of identity” and “sense of revenge” displays wild character of plainclothes and the Basij in Iran.

- **Devotion, *Taqiyeh***

The two concepts of “devotion” that means allegiance and “*Taghieh*” have special meaning in Islamic practical and religious and political culture of Iranian as well. The first is a spiritual practice that one entrusts his/her life to a supreme power that is usually his/her political leader. And “*Taghieh*” or dissimulation is also an Islamic tactic that lets individuals to conceal their beliefs, ideas and strategies at the time of danger to save their life physically and mentally. Attribution the *Basij* to these concepts beside the other material concepts makes the issue more complex.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

In this program the BBCPTV focus on identification of plain clothes and their relation to Iran’s authorities and ruling power while portrays an attack to Iranian with a stick as a usual treatment:

- *Attack to people with stick is a familiar and common treatment in Iran.*
- *Totalitarian regime contained of a group which is mixed of intellectuals and a group, called hooligans*

- *A group of the deprived people, who sometimes are called lumpen, that has no power and social position, but tried to approve their fidelity to the Ideology of totalitarian regime by eliminating its enemies*
- *The deprived levels are more attracted by the ideology of totalitarian regimes. Because in the first step, gives them identity, in the society which haven't any identity.*
- *We must define their identities in relation with power.*
- *It is easy to recruit from the lower-class.*
- *"Sepah" and Ahmadinejad take them as a tool to advance their political targets.*
- *All the totalitarian regimes' ideology from Astalism, Maoism, Hitlerian Fascist to Italian Fashist and even Poronism in Argentina and some other like Islamic fundamentalism in Iran have such faithfulness and devotion to the charismatic leader and it is not particularly in mysticism.*
- *The pressure force in Iran is more organized than you think. I cannot believe that plainclothes act independently and separate from state.*
- *It is right that they are faithful to the Islamic system ideologically, but it is not enough to think that they come to the scene only to defend the ideology.*
- *Plain clothes are a part of repression organization. If we play it down, it means we believe most of these repressions were self-motivated and there was no benefit for the Islamic Republic of Iran or even they could be as a threat for the governors.*
- *When somebody comes to disturb the demonstration with pistol, its independence from the state is under question.*



- **Passive and active verbs**

Most of sentences, as usual, are in active form.

- **Antagonist and protagonist**

The people who are beaten introduced as protagonist who have self-motivated and have social base, and the antagonists are organized group, whom beat the innocent people.

#### **4.2.9.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The discussion panel with duration of 53 minutes was broadcast by the BBCPTV on August 20, 2010. The theme/subtheme is Green Movement and democracy structural problems in Islamic Republic of Iran while human rights and freedom of speech is in highly attention.

The BBCPTV in its media framing has tried to show Iran aligned with totalitarian regimes like Fascist, that taking political, cultural and social control over the subjects that are usually headed by a charismatic leader. These leaders are accountable for every kind of suppression that always carry out by their devoted, who suffer from an identity crisis. Referring to the psychological dimension of plain clothes in Iran, leads the audiences to the highest degree of negative attitude toward their actions and their commanders that are high ranking officials.

The program has two panels, the invited experts, Mehrdad Darvishpoor, lecturer of sociology at Stockholm University and Hamed Yousefi, as a researcher of Islamic culture and their addressers in the second panel are Azadeh Asadi, graduated in banking and Shahin Parvizi as a filmmaker.

The presenter starts with expressing some recent and older cases which the plain clothes have been involved in their outbreak. And then immediately concludes that attack to people with a stick is a common and familiar case for Iranian. Putting forward disturbance and harassment as a usual anti-norm in Iran suggest the adverse conditions and more important violation of freedom of speech in Iran. By referring to old cases, the presenter convinces his audiences that there is no differences between before and after the revolution, between monarchy and the Islamic state. He apparently intends to identify them if they have political identity or social base and identity, however, confirming their political roots will put Iran in line with totalitarian regimes.

Darvishpoor as a psychologist is asked to express his opinion. He emphasizes, repeatedly, during the program, that the plainclothes in Islamic Republic of Iran have never belonged to social class, and they have political roots and under the control of radical party which included Supreme leader and Ahmadinejad, the when president. His reason is carrying weapons with the *Basij* or plainclothes who attacks peoples. Since carrying weapons are amongst major crime and common people never access to it, his reasons seems logic.

He also takes it as a common case in totalitarian regimes like the Nazis and Iran as well. He calls plainclothes as hooligans who belong to deprived level without identity. In his opinion they have a crucial role in these regimes because the authorities could hide their suppression behind them and pretend they have mass based, when military suppression has no more efficiency. Referring the plainclothes to hooligans and the deprived people has a very negative connotation. Hooliganism in every culture is equal with unlawful behavior and vandalism. They are able to do whatever they were asked. Possession of

such a group to crack down of opposites reveals the brutality of that regime. Referring to Green Movement, Darvishpoor believes that due to the abscission of the Islamic Republic's body, the plainclothes as an organized group take an important part in the suppression of its opposites. Furthermore, he knows the demonstration of Green Movement self-motivated movement with social base.

On the other hand Yousefi, as a researcher of Islamic culture, insists on theosophy discourse that has a great position in Iran's power discourse. He tries to compare the *Basij* with Fata or chivalrous group who were devoted to Imam Ali and accustomed to live simply however they were not poor. He also refers to other historical cases like "Ayyaran" or the role of Shaban Jafari and Tayyeb Haj Rezaee, which were connected to ruling power but has a social roots.

It seems that Yousefi has failed in comparing the *Basij* with these groups due to belonging them to deprived class of society. And even devotion to a superpower is not specific to theosophy and spiritual leaders. According to Drvishpoor you can find it in all the totalitarian regimes. He refers to Stalinism, Maoism, Fascist, Italian Fascist and even Peronism in Argentina and some other like Islamic fundamentalism in Iran that has such faithfulness and devotion to the charismatic leader and it is not particularly in mysticism.

Parvizi one of the addressers asked him to present a new definition because in modern world theosophy doesn't work more. He believes that forming the central core of these groups is out of theosophy. Their political aims are not ignorable, even it is wrapped in morality concepts. He refers to "Ansar-e-Hezbollah" that formed for implementation of "*Amr bil Maroof & Nahi Anil Munkar*" (Enjoining good & forbidding evil) but their

function shows displayed something else. Actually the plainclothes are as tools for central core power to advance their goals.

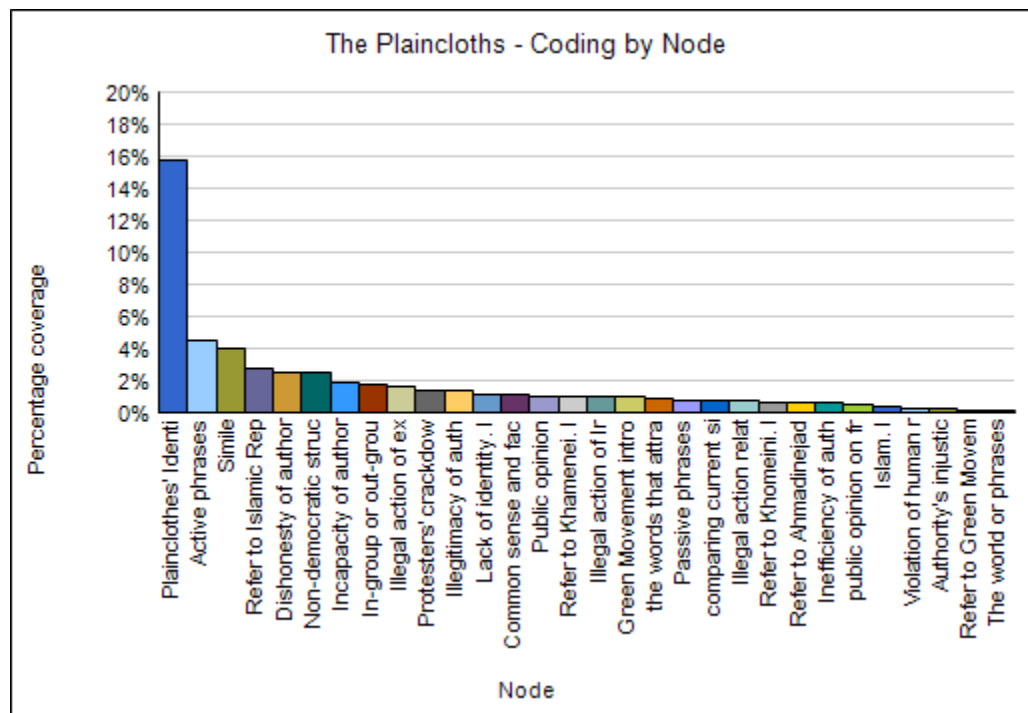
Asadi, the other guys, asked the experts to focus on the poverty of identity instead of insisting on religious motivation. She talks about a 15-year boy that takes a stick and attack the protestors. In her opinion in such cases the religious motivation is no more effective while the poverty of identity is more prominent. Actually, she stresses on this group's dependency to deprived level who have not an identity and find a new identity with attaching to this group.

Marginalization in this part considered as an important factor for membership in such a group. Yousefi believes that there is a difference between the plainclothes who are always ready to come to the scene and play their part and the plainclothes who are suddenly mobilized to prevent a demonstration and basically live in margin of wealth and fortune. They are widely recruited by the fixed plainclothes in emergencies. They are characteristic by poverty of identity and a sense of revenge and suffer from personal crisis.

During the program the presenter insists to find the relation between the plain clothes and "*Velayat-e-Faqih*" or clerical institution. But the experts don't believe it. Yousefi explains that there was such a relation before and the first years of the revolution due to charismatic characteristic of Ayatollah Khomeini as their spiritual leader. But neither Ayatollah Khamenei nor other clergyman couldn't make such a relation. He even goes beyond and considers them as an influential force on Supreme leader's decisions. On the other hand Darvishpoor believes that the plainclothes are in relation and under the

control of the extreme left and radical party. It could be Supreme leader or Sepah or Ahmadinejad.

In another part of discussion “*Taghieh*” is referred as the plainclothes’ tactic to avoid detection. Acting in anonymity condition in turn reveal the hidden negative connotation of “plainclothes.” Perhaps no other word can explain it to clear as well.



**Table 4.9: Plainclothes**

As a whole, discussion focuses on identification of plainclothes who belong to lower middle class and almost suffer from an identity crisis. These deprived levels are more attracted by the ideology of totalitarian regimes. Because in the first step, it gives them identity; in the society which haven't any identity. They try to approve their fidelity to the ideology of totalitarian regime by eliminating its enemies. No doubt that they are

faithful to the Islamic system ideologically, but it is not enough to think that they come to the scene only to defend the ideology. It is an outcome of a metamorphosis of the force groups who was active in the first year of revolution and what we are witnessing today.

Dishonesty and illegal actions of Iran's authorities as well as violation of human rights, however in low percentage, is coded by the researcher (Table. 4.9). Addressing repeatedly Iran's government as a totalitarian regime, emphasize on its non-democratic structure of the Islamic system. And named the Green Movement as a self-motivated group with a social base against the Basij force as a governmental force, with political identity, provokes the gap between Iran's authorities and communities.

#### **4.2.9.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms**

The words like SAVAK, *Basij* and plain clothes are familiar world with Iranian that are always associated with fear and horror, however, there is a large difference between them, considering their functions and their relation to ruling power. But what is more horrible, after Islamic revolution is engaging the plain clothes with religious beliefs and extreme radicalism. And what makes the story more complex is that, however, these plain clothes that are faithful to the Islamic system ideologically, but it is not enough to think that they come to the scene only to defend the ideology.

The intertwining of politics and religion in Iran makes the issue more complex. It seems that there is no room for talking about the theosophy that was emphasized in this program by Yousefi. Actually a new definition of plainclothes is needed as it is mentioned during the discussion.

The new definition of plainclothes that presented by the BBCPTV is who suffer from lack of identity, personal crisis. Living in margin of wealth and fortune makes a sense of revenge, identified the plainclothes as the most gruesome group against the Greens with the social base.

#### **4.2.10 Interview with Ayatollah Montazeri**

Ayatollah Montazeri was one of the senior cleric and the most knowledgeable religious scholar in Iran. He was also famous for the intense criticism to Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei that caused his life-long isolation. For many years he argued that the Islamic Republic of Iran is neither Islamic nor republic. He was one of the active advocate of democracy and civil rights in Iran. He died in sleep at his home on 19 December 2009, at the age of 87.

After the years of isolation, by emerge of the Green Movement, increased his popularity especially among the youth. His harsh criticism of Iran's authorities and his full support of Green Movement, turn him to the spiritual father of the movement, however for about 5 months. Definitely, no one else was being able to undermine the legitimacy of the Islamic system after the 2009 election. He repeatedly addressed the authorities and the supreme leader to avoid oppression and crackdown since the legitimacy will come from people satisfaction not from violence and repression.

On 21 December, a large number of mourners and the Green Movement supporters from across Iran attended at Montazeri's funeral ceremony. The opposites take it as a new chance to express their disguise of the Iran's supreme leader and government while confirming their strength.

The BBCPTV had done the most attempts to cover his remarks and criticisms. The present interview broadcast on the same day of his death. The controversial interview is included of his explicit comments about the dictatorial nature of Islamic Republic of Iran. This program is a short interview, about 20 minutes, with Ayatoh Montazeri that has been aired on December 19, 2009.

For years, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri criticized Iran's authorities and argued that Islamic democracy was not run in the country, as the leaders alleged to be. In the aftermath of Iran's 2009 presidential election, he appeared as the spiritual leader of the Green Movement and oppositions. He undoubtedly has a seminal role in the founding of the 1979 revolution. The BBCPTV has done many interviews with him and he, in all videos, put the legitimacy of Iran's Islamic government under question with resort to religious doctrines upon which the system was founded on it. It is noticeable that this interview was on air simultaneously with the day of his death.

Mr. Emadodin Baghi who interview with Ayatollah Montazeri, is an Iranian human rights activist, prisoners' rights advocate, investigative journalist, theologian and writer. He began his political activist as an Islamic Reformist, under the mentorship of Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri. And now he tries to revive the memories of Iran's executions at the first years of revolution as well as comparing with current situation by Ayatollah Montazeri who has been pushed to corner due to his intense criticizes.

The program is totally centered by Islam and Islamic teachings and beliefs. It is started with the reminiscent of Iran's execution by Ayatollah Montazeri and to continue the discussion, Mr. Baghi asks about the execution penalty while praising his behavior with prisoner's family before and after the revolution.



- *We know that there is always a series of political executions in Iran. In Holy Quran, the only case that the death penalty is permissible, and God ordered, is manslaughter. What I want to say is that you have in your book "Perspective of jail", corruption is not enough for execution. I would like to know your overall view about death penalties. We know special feature of you, our parents confirm it too, you helped the prisoner's family before the revolution and after it, ignoring their thought and ideology, and you were very generous with them.*

And he answers:

- *About jailing, we have valid "Hadis" by the Prophet Mohammad, he told if a person who is in charge with murder, you are allowed in prison him for 7 days. During these days, if complainants succeed to prove him guilty with strong evidences, you can execute him, otherwise you can't and you have to free him; because the human life was important with him. Now, you compare with what they (Iran's authorities) are doing.*

And continues with emotional sentences:

- *God is my witness that whatever I say about the Islamic Republic and the system is out of my benevolence. I think, now that after centuries that we could establish an Islamic system, not to make it spoiled and try to do something to hack in minds as well forever. When they arrest people with improper allegations, what we could say? For a while they were getting at "Tahkim-e Vahdat's party" or some other time getting at students, sometime women and others. They totally think they are able to manage a country in crisis.*

He also adds:

- *All over the world are in closed relation. When we arrest only a student, it is announced by the BBC and other broadcasters and news agency. Today we live in the global village.*

In his opinion Iran's authority are not more able to arrest people in charge of "invalid accusations" and expect to keep it in secret. He strongly expresses this sentence:

- *If you don't make a crisis, everything is OK. It is not an Islamic Republic while, you prison innocent people.*

Then Mr. Baghi refers to the closure of their club by Iran's officials and that of they explain such a thing is not on benefit of the country due to its reflection in international communities and human rights' reports. He adds:

- *I explained to them that international communities named 4 dictators in the world: Ben Ali, Bashar Asad, Ghazafi and Seyed Ali Khamenei that are the consequence of banning journals in Iran. It made us upset because we don't want our country, with an old history and a glorious background, at this level.*

And in continue he conveys their replay:

- *"No matter what they said, they are our enemies and it is natural and they must say such a thing about us."*

In fact, he conducts the discussion of public opinion issue that Ayatollah Montazeri already has pointed it out and attracts attention to comparing the importance of public opinion before and after the revolution. He talks about his memories, when was in prison and that how they treat them and it is repeatedly emphasized that public opinion and "reputation of country" was more important for Shah but Iran's authorities never care about it.

- *It was important, even for Shah that nothing said in contrary to the state's interests. But, now we see them (Iran's authorities) say something that has global reflection and they never mind.*

And on the other hand, he points to vulnerability of criticism of authorities by referring to Imam Ali's speeches that encourage Muslims to criticize him:

- *Imam Ali said: "I am not unerring, unless God attention and favor to me"; and now these gentlemen know themselves innocent and never notice the other ones.*

And addresses the authorities:

- *Now I call up all the Iranian authorities, friendly, be careful and reconsider what are doing. Making prison and the existence of "Special Revolutionary Court" and arresting people are all against the law. As you blamed the Shah at the time of his reign, the public blame you now for these conditions. They say the Leader is the cause of all arresting and imprisonment; he is the cause all troubles.*

Ayatollah Montazeri also backs to the closure of his office and the "Hoseynieh"<sup>42</sup> where they teach people Islamic concepts during the Moharram. They emphasize also on books gathering and transferring to unknown place. He also expresses his grief of dryness of trees in the Hoseynieh that shows the depth of adversity:

- *Our Hoseynieh is seized by them and its entire trees were dried. I want to say they have done such strong and bad treatment with us.*

And Mr. Baghi refers to his personal bank account that was blocked by them and his book that was not allowed to publish. Ayatollah Montazeri while confirms his words,

---

<sup>42</sup> . Hoseynieh is a congregation hall for Shia commemoration ceremonies, especially those associated with the remembrance of Muharram. The name comes from Hussein Ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and the third Imam of the Shia Muslims.

explain about the Islamic concepts that has been written in his book and that it is to benefit of Islam. And by the end, expresses some intense sentences that have a very heavy connotation to Iran's authorities that shows nothing but suffocation and dictatorship in Iran:

- *It is said that if you are not able to publish any book, take it to Lebanon, and if you couldn't there, take it to Israel. You can write a book all over against Israel and Zionist, but you could publish it in Israel; it is why they progress and you don't. Because they treat in this way and you... you have no mercy to your kindred. This book is in favor of Shia. It is in favor of Islam and unity of Muslims. They kept it for 6 months and will never permit to print.*

And end his speech with explicit reference to “self” and “other”:

- *Notice that this “self” and “others” that you try to make it common, people never care. They are all the insider. The country belongs to all not particular groups.*

#### **4.2.10.1 Description level of Analysis**

- **There is always a series of political executions in Iran, 1988 mass execution, in Quran death penalty is allowed only for manslaughter.**

Displaying the execution as a usual punishment and immediately referring to 1988 execution in Iran. It shows a high level of violation of human rights coupled with injustice of Iranian authorities when Ayatollah Montazeri expresses judgment of Quran about the death penalty. Accordance with Quran death penalty is permitted only for one who kill a human being while those executed in 1988 were all prisoners of ideology.

- **Help the prisoner's family before the revolution and after it, ignoring their thought and ideology.**

Displaying the lack of freedom of ideology both before and after the revolution. On the other hand showing Ayatollah Montazeri's democratic thoughts.

- **Arresting people with improper allegations, invalid accusations, manage a country in crisis.**

Combining these terms by Ayatollah Montazeri indicates inefficiency and incapability of Iranian officials. Moreover introduces the Iran's rulers as the source of crisis and conflicts after the 2009 election.

- **Four dictators in the world: Ben Ali, Bashar Asad, Ghazafi and Seyed Ali Khamenei.**

Counting the name of Ayatollah Khomeini in line with three famous dictators in the world is reminded of non-democratic structure of the Islamic system.

- **Before the revolution public opinion was important, the reputation of the country was important, now our reputation is in danger with torturing in prisons.**

Comparing before and after the 1979 revolution from the perspective of public opinion. Insignificance of public opinion almost occurs in dictatorship governments. What is bolded here is the international reputation of Iran that had been important in previous regime, but it is not matter of importance with Iranian authorities even exposure of torturing in prisons.

- **Our house is seized by them and their entire trees were dried**

Putting forward the dryness of trees beside illegal confiscation of Ayatollah Montazeri, stimulate a sense of sorrows. Dryness of a tree means destroying sense of life while confirms brutality of the Iran's executives.

- **Evidentialities and modalities**

In this interview the interviewer tries to draw the discussion into dedicated comparing of Islamic revolution with the previous monarchy system. Actually, the non-Islamic and non-democratic structure of the Islamic system is underline by him:

- *There is always a series of political executions in Iran.*
- *Corruption is not enough for execution.*
- *It is not an Islamic Republic, while you prison innocent people.*
- *Public opinion was important for the previous regime.*
- *It was important, even for Shah that nothing said in contrary to the country's interests*
- *They collected all the books we have bought for studying*
- *My book is in favor of the Shia and Islam and unity of Muslims. They kept it for 6 months and will never permit to print.*
- *If you are not able to publish any book, take it to Lebanon, and if you could not there, take it to Israel.*
- *After a century that we could establish an Islamic system, don not make it spoiled.*

#### **4.2.10.2 Interpretation level of Analysis**

The theme/subtheme of interview targets the violation of human rights, the structural problem of the Islamic system and legitimacy of Islamic Republic while the Green Movement is on top of the subject.

This twenty minute interview was framed to reveal the true face of Islamic Republic leaders in a worst possible way by one of the famous figures who was supposed to be the successor to Supreme leader. The legitimacy of government and its officials' behaviors is evaluated through Islamic exhortations. Since the Violence of freedom of speech and crack down on supporters of the Green Movement is the central point, Iran's authorities are tagged as accounting for all injustice and crises. Dictatorial behaviors by who are bearer of Islam's flag, definitely, creates a sense of antipathy in the viewer's mind toward the officials.

At the beginning of the interview, Emadoddin Baghi<sup>43</sup>, as an interviewer, points out the condition of political activists and mass execution of prisoners of ideology in Iran. He considers the executions an as usual case in Iran, which in turn indicate violation of human rights and suffocative environment in Iran.

Ayatollah Montazeri at first express his loyalty to Islamic system and swore what he said is just out of his sympathy for Islamic state; however he repeatedly reminds it during the interview. He continues with explaining precautionary measures to prevent the 1988 execution and while condemning the death penalties for political activists, refers to Holy Prophet Mohammad's thoughts as the Muslims' guide. According to Prophet Mohammad and Quran, nobody has right to kill others, even if he/she is supposed to be murder unless it is approved within 7 days and with strong evidences. In continue, he compares the prophet's word with the dominant situation in Islamic system in Iran and concludes that human life has no value with the authorities. That is an apparent reference to gross violation of human rights in Iran.

---

<sup>43</sup> . Emadeddin Baghi is an Iranian human rights activist, prisoners' rights advocate, investigative journalist, theologian and writer.

In another part he puts forward Imam Ali's thought, who has a special place among the Shia Muslims. Ayatollah Montazeri talk about his tolerance against criticism and his spiritual of consulting. Then he compares his thoughts with Iran's authorities who pretend are his followers but never let the people express their ideas. He emphasizes on arresting the innocent people with improper and invalid accusations. He tries to show the intense violation of freedom and suffocation atmosphere in Iran. It also confirms the non-democratic structural dominant Islamic system. However, he emphasizes that it is not an "Islamic Republic" while the innocent people are tortured in prisons.

He also draws attention to the status of public opinion in two periods, before and after the 1979 revolution. While he talks about his memories of prison before the revolution as a political activist, he believes that public opinion and Iran's international reputation have a special place for the Shah. In his opinion, Iran's authorities never think about it and public opinion and global reflection never make sense with them.

It seems that Baghi tries to make his words clear with his experiences and attempts to bring Ayatollah Montazeri to current situation who has more tendency to talk about his old experience. He talks about the closure of his club and international community reports about freedom of speech status in Iran. He mentions that according to their reports, Ayatollah Khamenei, is among other famous dictators and it could discredit the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Ayatollah Montazeri while confirming his remarks adds that we are living in a global village and it is impossible to hide the news. In this part he specifically names the BBC as an informational service that expose what they want to be concealed. Addressing the



BBC by Ayatollah Montazeri as a service which anything could hide from its camera lens, increases the reputation and credibility of the BBC in its audience's sight.

He reminds the authorities' injustice by referring to "Islamic Revolutionary Court" that according to him was is totally against the law. The Islamic Revolutionary Court is a special system that tries mostly those who acting against national security and try to overthrow the Islamic government. It has been established in order of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Actually, Ayatollah Montazeri retrospect to the illegal base of court and judgment in Islamic system which is continued till the current situations.

Baghi tries to pose another dimension of violation of freedom of speech by reminding him the prevention of Islamic government for publishing his Islamic books. And he confirms the prohibition of publishing in Iran and does a horrible comparison between Iran and Israel since addressing the Israel an approved country. He describes publishing conditions in Israel emphasized that you could publish everything, even if it is against their interests and consider it the reason of their progress.

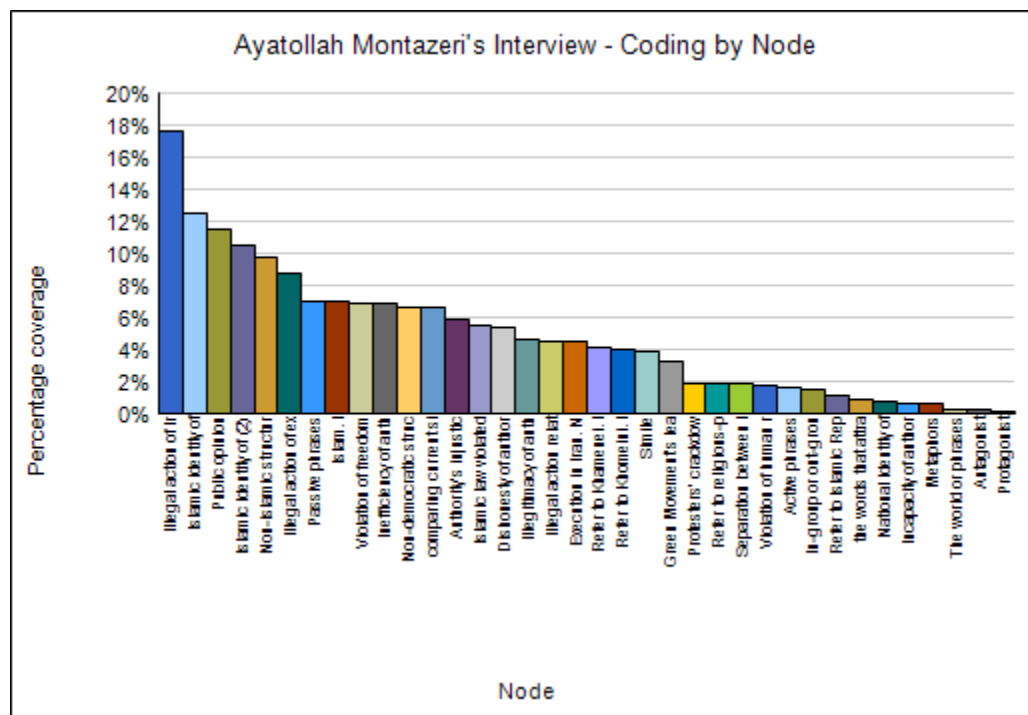
He not only compares Iran with its sworn enemy, but also compares Islamic government with a Jewish state, implicitly, while getting priority to Jewish one. He actually undermines the Islamic system and Islamic-democracy, alleged by authorities.

He repeatedly expresses the public's dissatisfaction with the government, but reminds their fidelity with Islam and religion and Islamic state. In these comments he put the religious legitimacy of the government in question and political legitimacy as well when he introduces the pro-Green Movement as those who just seek for their rights.

The very important part of his speech is his last sentences. He invites the governors to stop the division between people and themselves while the authorities called them as the external agents that must be suppressed, with these words:

- *The people never listen to “self” and “others” that you try to make it common. They are all insiders. The country belongs to all not particular groups.*

As it is obvious in table (4.10), illegal actions by Iran’s authorities is in a high level of percentage. The Islamic identity of Iranian and Islamic identity of government against non-Islamic structure of government are the constituents of important nodes.



**Table 4.10: Ayatollah Montazeri's interview**

Inefficiency, dishonesty and Islamic laws that are violated by officials are coded as well as violation of human rights and freedom of speech by referring to Iran's executions in

1989. Comparing prisoner's situations before and after the 1979 revolution and some other stories that were mentioned will be discussed at description level of analysis.

#### **4.2.10.3 Explanation of Construction of Social Identity and Norms**

What is obvious in this interview is that the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic is undermined from two points. First, it is undermined by a Grand Ayatollah who was supposed to be successor to Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic revolution that means body destruction of the Islamic system. The second, which is more important, is being criticized from a religious point of view that was very hurtful for the Islamic system. Whereas Ayatollah Montazeri uses religious to attack the government's legitimacy, referred to Quran and "*Hadis*" and Holy Prophet.

Actually, nobody on earth was able to delegitimize Ayatollah Khomeini due to his special position before and after the 1979 revolution. He is known as the first one who disagreed with Khomeini's order toward execution of thousands of political activists that eventuated to his dismissal from leadership and years of isolation. Therefore, his sincere advocate of human rights and freedom of speech is obvious to everyone. When he came back to the political arena, after the 2009 election, much more explicit than before, criticized the illegal actions of the government that draw human rights' activists' attention to him.

In this interview he identified Islamic Republic of Iran based on oppression, changing people's votes, arresting and jailing innocent people for improper accusations, killing and torturing protestors, violation of freedom, creating repression and crisis. Evidently,

it is all specification of dictatorship state other than Islamic system. He had repeatedly announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran is neither Islamic nor republic.

And last but not least is that the BBCPTV broadcast this interview just on the occasion of his death, exactly in the mildest of protests and riots in Iran.

### **4.3 Synthesis of Findings**

However the collected data, included of the BBCPTV's news and programs were discussed in three level of analysis within the specified framework, but upon following out the research goals to answer the research questions, it is needed to be much clear to the issue. Since the main concern with this research is the BBCPTV's affection on Iranians' social knowledge, identity and norms, thus, the findings must be shown in coherent form to set the discussion on answering the research questions at ease.

As it is discussed in details in chapter 3, at least eight theme/subtheme are considered to formulate the key concepts of what the research is founded on them: social knowledge, social identity and norms. It is noticeable that the theme of the news or programs are determined by the story that the program is directly concentrated on. The subtheme also is subordinate theme that the subject of the program indirectly is centralized on it. Indeed, in this part, the research findings and coded data are revised in a final form which is much closer to the ultimate goals of this research.

To validate the discussion, the coded data or nodes, are selected and classified based on specified theme/subtheme that are categorized in 8 sections that are more emphasized by the BBCPTV. After determination of percentage of each relevant code, utilized by the Nvivo software, they are shown in pie chart to have an illustrated picture of classified coded data. The categorizations are as follows:

1. Fraud in election (Social knowledge and Norms)
2. Green Movement (Social knowledge and identity)
3. Iranian Identity (social knowledge and Identity)
4. Islamic Identity of System (Social knowledge and identity)
5. Identification of Iranian authorities (Social knowledge and Identity)
6. Democracy and structural problems (Social knowledge and Norms)
7. Human rights or freedom of speech (Social knowledge and Norms)
8. Legitimacy of government and executive branch (Social knowledge and Norms and Identity)

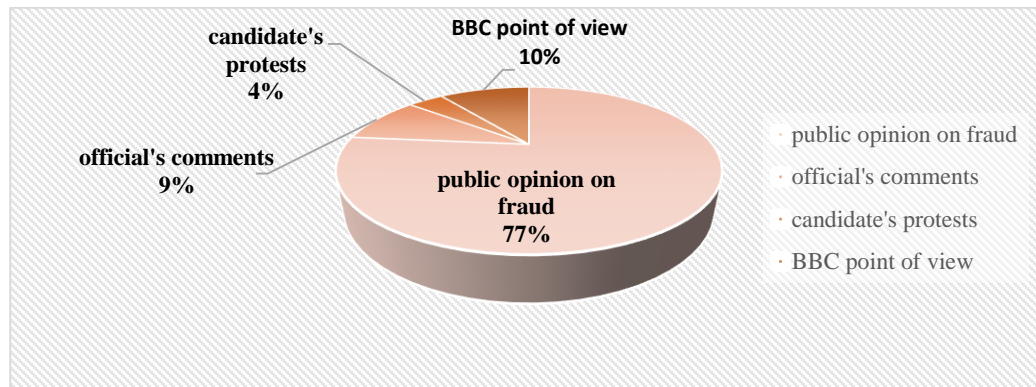
The discussion on these theme/subtheme based on findings that are displayed in related chart could be a great help for valid answers.

#### **4.3.1 Fraud in election (Social knowledge and Norms)**

As it is discussed in chapter 2, the first step for mobilization and forming a movements is collective definition of social or political problems that in this case is fraud in election. Therefore, the BBCPTV tries to show the fraud in the election as an indicator of anti-norms had happened in Iran. Consensus opinion about an anti-norm in a society could be in turn as an accelerator for admission of new norms. Since the norms are acceptable rules by the considerable number of a community, therefore, the values and beliefs with social roots has the highest chance of social admission.

To that end, the BBCPTV tries, as it is shown in chart (4.1), to reflect public opinion on this matter at first step. Confirmation of fraud in election by public opinion provides a social based for protests and identified the Green Movement as a self-motivated

movement. Evidently, it brings the movement in line with the grassroots movement in next steps.



**Chart 4.1: Fraud in Election**

The reflection of public opinion on fraud in the election, on the other hand, shows the BBCPTV's success in creating interaction space with Iranian communities that is main goals of transnational TV in their targeted countries. A close relationship, definitely, is associated with more impacts.

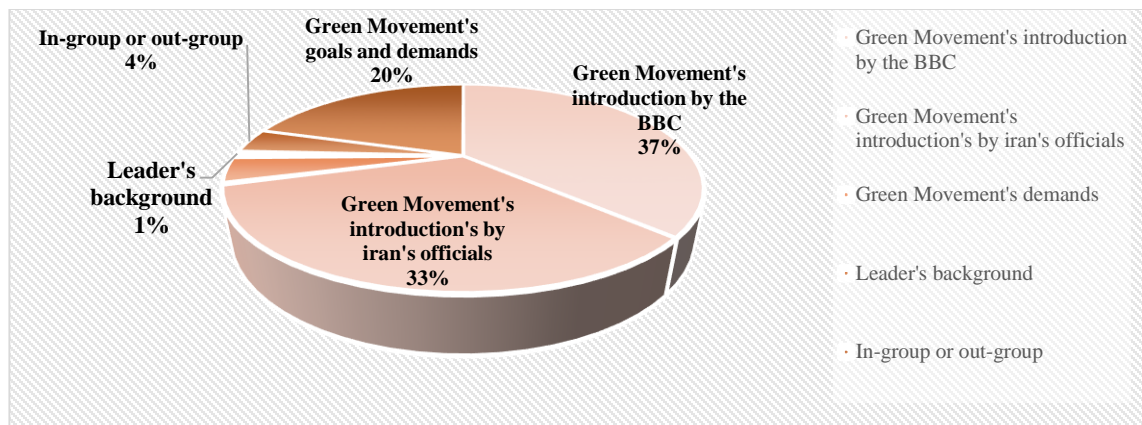
However the BBCPTV always tries to show impartially in coverage of news, but after the announcing the election results by Iranian press, focuses in details of the results and the amount of candidates' votes in their birthplace, and called it as an "rear case" in compare with other countries or even Iran's election history. Interpreting the social and political issues and analyzing the current affaires only by the opposites of Islamic Republic of Iran is not only unprofessional and unfair, but also the audiences were bombarded by biased information. In lack of private media in Iran, the BBCPTV's point of view could be more effective on public opinion.

Drawing audiences' attention to pre-filled ballots, however it was pointing out by the protest leaders and their fans. The leaders' statements and their position toward the election results were also underlined by the BBCPTV. Putting the Green leaders as the peace messengers, against the government and Iran's officials' threats and intimidation of protests was another way that suggests "engineering the election" which was mentioned on behalf of the Green leaders. Calling ballots as "jugglery boxes" and repeatedly emphasized on "ridicules results" and considering the election as a "game", that were highlighted by the protesters leaders, all confirm the fraud in election.

As a matter of fact, fraud in the election is recognized as a reality and political anti-norms that was carried out by the Iranian authorities. It is portrayed by the BBCPTV as an issue that provided by the public opinion that shows collective definition of problem as an anti-norms by the Iranians, specifically who believed their votes were stolen by the government.

#### **4.3.2 Green Movement (Social knowledge and identity)**

The widespread protests over the possible fraud lead to massive street demonstrations in support of Mousavi's reformist Green Movement. Since then the demonstrators were known as the pro-Green Movement with Green headband or flag. Lack of private media in Iran and blocked access to social media and websites, made the situation restricted for the Green leaders to be heard. But as it is revealed by chart (4.2), the BBCPTV has done the best to introduce and identified the Green movement by draw attentions to their goals and demands and the leaders who were the production of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



**Chart 4.2: Identification of Green Movement**

The Green movement is introduced by the BBCPTV as the innocent people who just asking for their primary rights. It is against the Iran's authorities' opinion about the protestors that addressed them as a hooligan, subversive and the foreign enemies' puppets. The Green's goals and demands were introduced by the leaders and reflected by the BBCPTV that could attract any Iranian mind on that closed political atmosphere. Freedom of speech and press, freedom on political prisoners that were engaged with their slogan, "where is my vote", were adequate to prove the movement's legitimacy. The way that the Green Movement was introduced by the Iranian authorities via news agencies and IRIB, was reflected by this service to reveal how Islamic Republic's reaction is against the political dissidents.

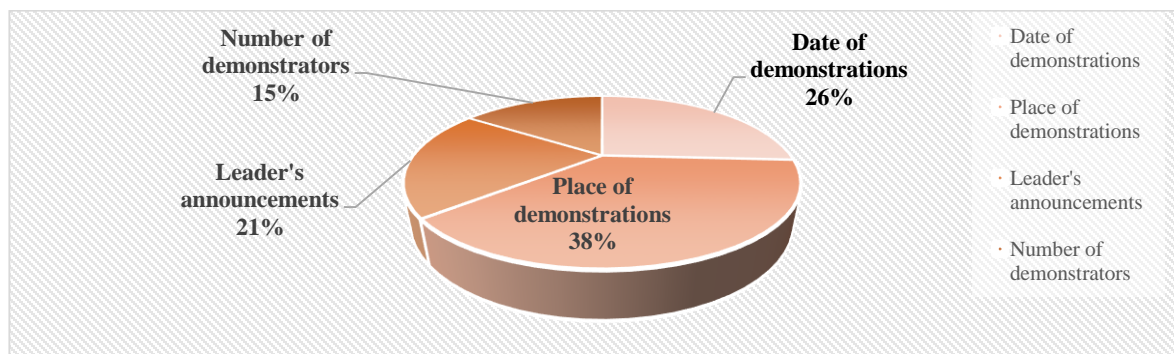
In this regard, the protagonists of the story are always the movement's leaders, against the Iranian authorities which are introduced as the antagonists by the BBCPTV. Indeed, it could be a great help to show "we" against "them" and creation of "we ness" feeling among the protestors. The protagonists of the story are who seriously defend the people's right and fight for freedom of speech and never silent against violation of



human rights in Iran. On the other hand the antagonists are those who beat, torture and kill the innocent people and do everything to keep their power.

Of course identification of in-group and out-group is an important part of a social movement's forming that somehow illustrates the group's interests and beliefs and consequently the ideology of the group.

As it is shown in chart (4.3), the identification of the movement was not only limited to the movement's demands. In lack of access to media, even insignificant information about the movement has been announced by the BBCPTV; namely, the place of movement and the number of demonstrators and location of demonstrations. These information could be a great help to mobilization. Knowing about the number of demonstrators, that was always reporting more than thousands, impacts on social comparison and supremacy and degradation of a group in comparing to other group. It seems logic that people attached themselves to high ranking social group and identify themselves based on the group's values and behave collectively with fellow group members to ameliorate their situation (Festinger, 1954).

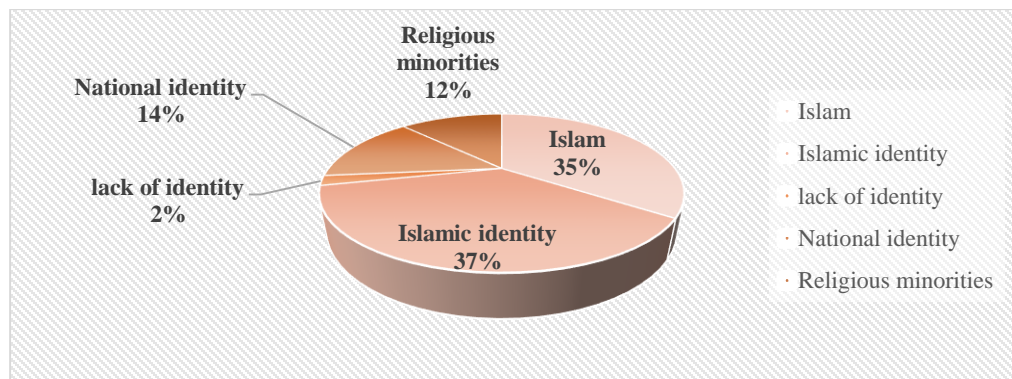


**Chart 4.3: Green Movement's Information**

An indubitable truth is that the BBCPTV after inducing the fraud, has played an effective role in specification of Green Movement's identity by identification of supporters and their goals and demands.

### 4.3.3 Iranian Identity (social knowledge and Identity)

As it was discussed in details about crisis identity of Iranian, regarding their two totally opposite identities, the BBCPTV has repeatedly emphasized on Islamic identity of Iranians, but has tried to remind their national identity that belong to before 1979 Islamic revolution. The religious dimensions of Iranian beliefs, as it appears in chart (4.4) are in highly stressed by referring to various ceremonies like Friday prayer, Ashura, funerals or ceremonies or religious rituals.



**Chart 4.4: Iranian Identity**

Talking about Islam and Islamic concepts is also prominent in the programs. But what is important is that these concepts are brought up just to show illusory nature of Islam in compare with Baha'i's teachings and other religious minorities. For instance referring to "Taqiyah" and violence in Islam.

On the other hand, the religious and Islamic identity of Iranian has been challenged when the whole programs covering violations and trample of Islamic teachings by the claimants of Islam that are the ruler of Islamic government with Islamic identity. In fact, considering the Islamic identity of Iranians that has been replaced with their Iranian identity by the leaders of Revolution, the BBCPTV tries to picture the Islamic identity with Iranian authorities' behaviors who have the main role in this shift. Also the governmental forces with strong religious identity, like Basij and plain clothes, are identified as those who suffer from personal crisis and lack of Identity. (Chart 4.4)

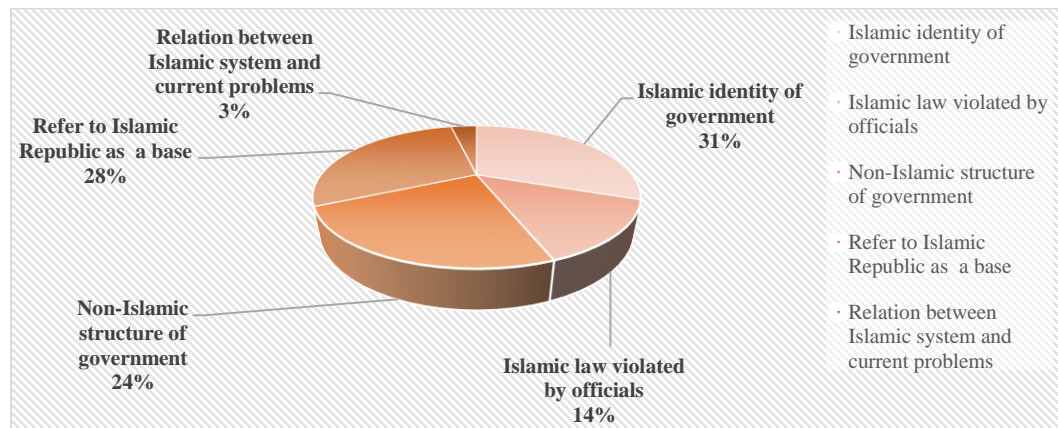
Since one of the Green's demands was separation of religious from state that was revealed in their slogans and their insist on Iranian identity not religious identity, thus, showing the violence face of Islam could undermine at first, Islam and then the Islamic Identity of Iranian, while pave the way for admission of new identity that was mixture of both Iranian and religious identity.

#### **4.3.4 Islamic Identity of System (Social knowledge and identity)**

After emphasizing on Iranian identity and Islamic identity as dominant identity in Iran, now refers to Islamic identity of government and undermines the Islamic system by depicting the Islamic law that is violated by Iran's executives.

Torturing, sexual abuse and killing the protesters that are bolded considerably, are not only illegal actions but also they are abhorrent in all religious schools. These concepts totally put the Islamic structure of the ruler system in a serious challenge (Chart 4.5). Execution sentence for political activities, violation of human rights are all considered as the issues that arose out of revolutionary thoughts. On the other hand, the BBCPTV

by reviewing the history of Iran's revolution and reminding some issue, attempts to show the roots of current problems in Islamic Revolution and their leaders and extremist group who commit acts of violence under the name of Islam.



**Chart 4.5: Islamic Identity of system**

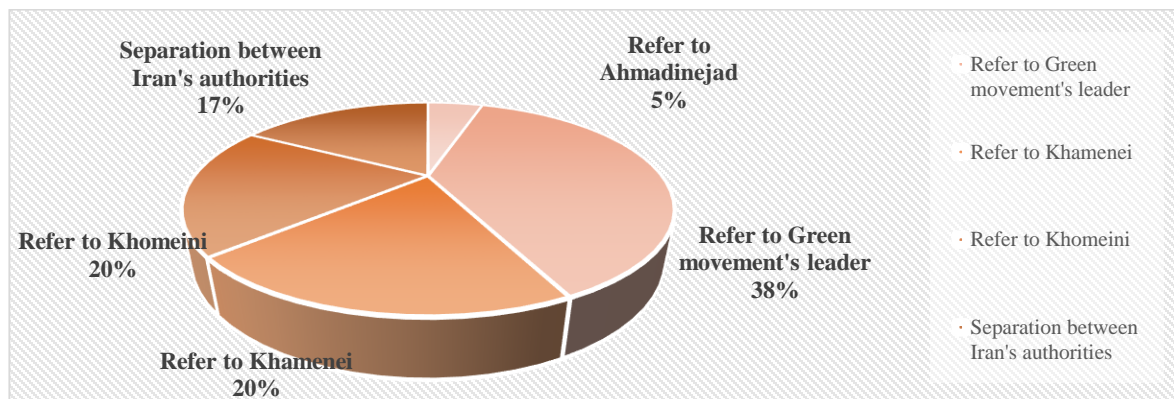
For instance, during the news and programs and in a specific program which discussed in last section, Khomeini's legacy, the BBCPTV repeatedly has brought up the Iran 1988 mass executions to either remind or compare the current situation and executions with that phase. On the other hand, comparing the current Islamic government with before years of the 1979 revolution and the monarchical form of government, make the issue more complex. It is in fact portraying what Iranian have lost against what they have achieved by the 1979 revolution. It is exactly undermining the Islamic and religious identity which Iranian government was labeled with, after the revolution.

Identification of Iranian government as an anti-Islamic government challenges either legitimacy of the Islamic system or legitimize the Green Movement that were against this system. Identification of Iranian authorities, on the other hand, could enhances we-

feeling among pro-Green Movement while specifies in-group and out-group classification.

#### 4.3.5 Identification of Iran's authorities (Social knowledge and Identity)

The BBCPTV identified the Islamic leaders, from the founder of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, to current leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. It also included Iran's presiden, Ahmadinejad, and the Green leaders, Mousavi, Karroubi and Grand Ayatollah Montazeri (Chart 4.6). However, the Green Movement's leaders also were known as the Islamic governors, but after the election appeared as the opposites of the system which they were qualified by it.



**Chart 4.6: Identification of Iranian Authorities**

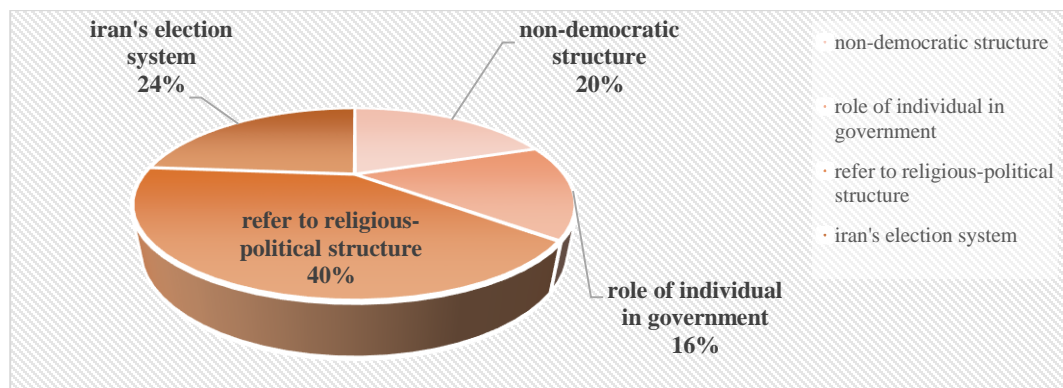
According to the programs, Ayatollah Khomeini is introduced as a dictator who killed thousands of innocents under the name of Islam. The then Iran's leader is also introduced as a criminal dictator who like the pervious leader, maintenance of the system and his power is his priority. And also the president that is supported by the supreme leader is identified as a liar who is against people not beside them.

Despite the fact that the Green leaders were all the main leaders of Islamic Republic of Iran, but they are identified as the saviors of Iran and Iranians who are still supported by most of the religious leaders and the “*Marjas*”. Indeed, what is outcome of these programs by the BBCPTV is focus on refraction of body of the Islamic system and a growing separation among the authorities.

For the first time, after the Islamic revolution the Iranians heard frankly that their religious leaders are addressed as dictator, criminal, violators of human rights. It is not only a clear separation between “we” against “other” but also put the Islamic Republic of Iran in a serious challenge of legitimacy, both religiously and politically.

#### 4.3.6 Democracy and structural problems (Social knowledge and Norms)

Since the elections is the matter of utmost importance in any democratic country, therefore the election has a decisive role in the state’s structure of democracy. Referring to the role of individuals in the election and the considering aftermath of the election and wide unrests in Iran, they are all suggestions of non-democratic structure of the Islamic system.

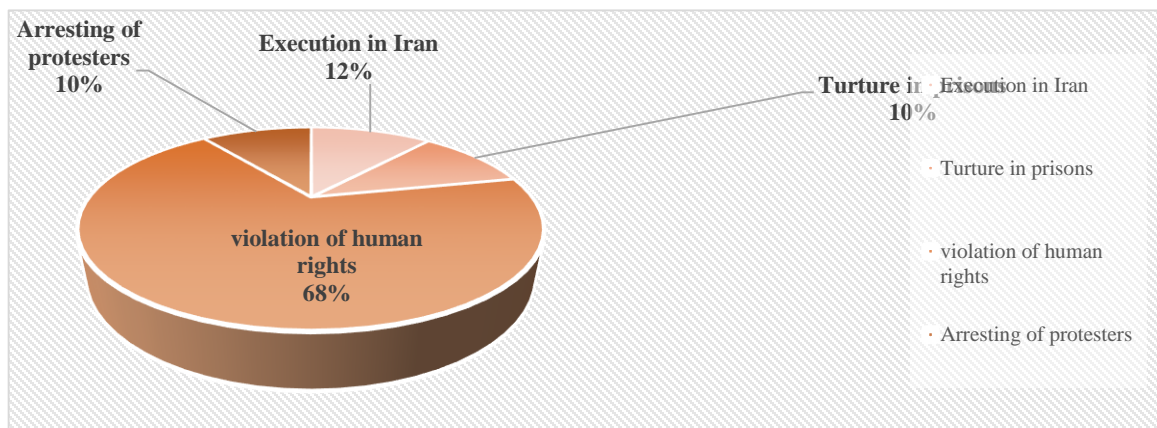


**Chart 4.7: Democracy and Structural problems**

According to the chart (4.7), the BBCPTV's more emphasize is on religious-political structure of Islamic system as the source of all Iran's problems. As it has been discussed, "*Velayat-e-Faqih*" and structure of power in Iran, the key role of the clerical establishment and accreditation of candidates by Guardian Council, the issue of security of Islamic system, are all suggest the non-democratic structure of Iran. Above all, rigging in the election and directly referring to the electoral system of Iran as a rare case, by the BBCPTV, confirm a political anti-norm carried out by Iranian governors.

#### 4.3.7 Human rights or freedom of speech (Social knowledge and Norms)

What is more prominent in research findings is violation of human rights and violation of freedom of speech in Iran (chart 4.8).



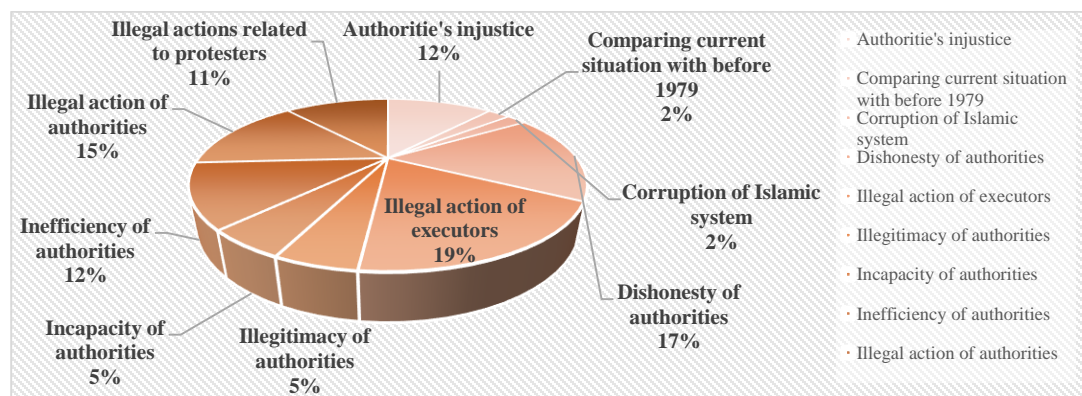
**Chart 4.8: Violation of Human rights**

Once again, referring to Iran's executions and torturing and sexual abuse in dentations, in a high level of frequency and referring repeatedly to Amnesty International's announcements in the news, are coded to suggest the serious contravention of human

rights in Iran. Intense and harsh encounters of anti-riots police as an illegal treatment of Iran's executives with protesters and at the end, arresting the Green Movement's leaders in conditions of illegality, confirmed the breaking of social and civil norms and violation of freedom of speech.

#### 4.3.8 Legitimacy of government and executive branch (Social knowledge and Norms and Identity)

The legitimacy is, by itself, a fundamentally subjective and normative concept and exists only in the beliefs of an individual about the rightfulness of authorities. Actually, the term "legitimacy" is often positively interpreted as the normative status conferred by the people to their governors' actions, based upon the belief that their government's actions are appropriate uses of power.



**Chart 4.9: Legitimacy of government**

According to what the BBCPTV addressed the Iran's government has a serious credibility deficit. Inefficiency and injustice, dishonesty and incapacity of authorities and executives, effects on admissibility and legitimacy of government by people (Chart



4.9). On the other hand, it gives a new identity to Iran's government that is against Islamic structure of the system. The BBCPTV tries to confirm the non-Islamic and non-democratic structure of the system by comparing the Islamic system with Iran's monarchy system, before the revolution in 1979.

However, considering all coded data as a subset of violation of human rights and lack of democracy and freedom of speech can delegitimize the Iranian government, but direct pointing out to all violations of what is known as a norm in society pave the way for fundamental change in social and political change.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The CDA of the data collected in the light of Nvivo software was presented in this chapter. In sum, the findings, in two stages of analysis support the following issues:

1. Undermine the Ayatollah Khomeini's character as founder and leader of the Islamic revolution and introducing Ayatollah Khomeini as a "killer", "dictator", "trickster."
2. Undermine the principal of "'*Velayat-e-Faqih*'" as the foundation of the Islamic Republic and extra judicial power of Supreme leader.
3. Considering violation of human rights and freedom of speech in Iran as a fundamental issue, carried out by the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini. It is provided by referring to the representation of 1988 Iran executions, repeatedly.

4. Propound wide violation of human rights and freedom of speech, referring to crack down and torture of detainees during the aftermath of the 2009 election as a political anti-norm.
5. Lack of freedom of the press in Iran.
6. Bring up injustice, inefficiency, illegal actions and dishonesty of Iran's officials.
7. Undermine the Islamic identity of the Islamic Republic as an Islamic system.
8. Undermine the Islamic identity of Iranian that has been given to them by the Islamic revolution.
9. Polarization and otherness making, "self" and "others" with categorizing the "pro-Green Movement" as "self" and the rest whether right or left as "others."
10. Autocratic narration of the Islamic Republic of Iran and challenging its political and religious legitimacy.
11. And at the end, Iranians' "freedom of temptation of theocracy" as the Islamic system's legacy.

Next chapter, regarding the findings, presents the discussion in order to objectives and questions of research.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The following chapter is presented in some parts. First a brief review of the research to make once more clear what the research is going to discuss in synthesis of findings. Then, the research findings are evaluated within a final form and categorization, regarding the core aspects in constructivist approach to answer the research questions. It is proceeded by recommendations for future research and implications of research and ends with a comprehensive conclusion.

### **5.2 Overview of the Study**

The main concern with the present research is drawing attention to the role of satellite channels in social movements and Iran's Green Movement has been selected as a case study to evaluate the role of the BBCPTV in this movement. The Green movement has been existed after the 2009 controversial presidential election in Iran, originated in alleged fraud in the election. In Iran's media repression atmosphere, the BBCPTV, based in London, not only has a constant coverage of massive protests, but also tried to inform Iranians of what were prevented to know about the unrests by their authorities. This issue could be more significant when the Green leaders have no access to media and Iran's press was under the absolute authority and control of Islamic government. Therefore, it seems that the transnational channels could play an important part in Iranian Green Movement.

Evaluation of the role that media can play in social movements, needs to know about the social movements and process of forming and mobilization and effective factors that media could impact on them. With this research, considering comprehensive literatures in this field, a social movement is the project of moving from the collective identity to collective behaviors and actions. Therefore, three factors were considered as an outcome and significant points in forming and mobilization of social movements: 1) Actors with their common sense of problems (collective idea) that in turn could create a sense of “we ness” or identified “we” against “them.” 2) Ideology that specify the goals and show the way, and 3) the social context that is a crucial point in success or fail of movements.

Evidently, the first step was the common sense of social problems and collective identity. But what determines what the problems are? Or in other words, how the reality are socially constructed? How this constructed realities eventuated in collective identities and collective behaviors as the aim of movements? And what does determine the way that movement’s goals and values come true?

In this research, the author found the answer of these questions in light of constructivist approach that recognizes the importance of “discursive power” (knowledge, ideas, culture, language, and ideology) as well as “material power.” Regarding constructivist approach people act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them; and these meanings are derived from social interactions and modifies through interpretation. According to Wendt, identities and consequently interests that determine actors’ behaviors, are constructed by sharing ideas rather than giving by nature. On the other hand, social norms define the rules of behaviors.

Since the shared knowledge and ideas plays a decisive role in all aspects of the social structure, belief, interests, material values and practice, the role of media in this field is more prominent than ever. In this framework media is not a mirror that reflects the reality but rather, through specific discourse, constructs the reality to impact on social knowledge, identity, norms and finally the attitude and behavior of its audiences; of course, through specific media framing. Therefore, the role of media in identification of social movements, collective identity and collective behaviors is not ignorable, however, failing or succession is interconnected with social context that social movement occurs in it. But in non-democratic countries and in political sophistication climates with lack of freedom of the press and expression, satellite channels and transnational TV take this role from outside for the inside citizens.

What happened to Iran's presidential election in 2009, and its turbulent aftermath, immersed the country in the years-long political crisis till now. In the absence of private TV and limited access to the internet and social media, the BBCPTV was accused by Iranian authorities repeatedly to involve in post-election unrests and orchestrate the protestors in line with the Green Movement's goals. However, the BBCPTV has rejected such a claim and pretend to inform the people who knowing is their right.

Regarding the Green Movement's goals and demands, and considering objectives of the research, within the presented specific theoretical framework, the main concern with this research is to figure out if the BBCPTV's media policy has been in parallel with the Greens and its probable attempt to construction of Iran's Green Movement.

### **5.3 Discussion of Research Questions**

#### **5.3.1 Research Question #1: How the BBCPTV influences in construction of intersubjective space to challenge Iranian's social knowledge, identities and dominant norms in order to create a collective identity to form Iran's Green movement?**

Regarding constructivist approach as a framework to examine media affection on collective behavior, this question was raised to figure out the BBCPTV's attempt to influence Iranian social knowledge, identity and norms in order to provide we-feeling and collective identity in support of Iran's Green Movement. No doubt, the Iranians who were addresses of the BBCPTV, getting enough information and understanding of what they were forbidden to access.

In an overall view, the BBCPTV's audiences were well-informed about the details of the election results, experts' opinions in this regard and the aftermath of the election. They had gotten comprehensive information on the Green Movement's leaders and their activities and goals. The BBCPTV even had gone beyond the coverage of news about Iran's election and provided its audiences with supplementary programs like two discussion panels which has been analyzed in chapter 4. Most of these programs with controversial theme were broadcast in order to have the highest impact on shaping Iranian public opinion with frank discussion about Iran's authorities and Islamic revolution's leaders.

With a glance look at discourse analysis in chapter 4, and considering the synthesis of findings, it is obvious that the BBCPTV since the beginning of the protests has insisted to induce rigging in election as an anti-norm, in light of the Green leader's remarks and

also benefited by the experts' comments, who were opposite of Iranian government, and more important with resort to public opinion. Considering public opinion in a social or political movements is too important because it could suggest collective definition of a social or political problems by a community and identify the movement with social base. Regarding the data analysis, the Green Movement is identified by the BBCPTV in many aspects. It is concluded their leaders, their slogans, their goals and demand and even their numbers. The Islamic rulers and Iranian authorities are also identified by this service. Indeed, the BBCPTV has attempted to identify the border between "we" and "them" or in-group and out-group.

According to the BBCPTV "we" are identified as those innocent and defenseless people who only look for their citizen rights and are tortured and killed just for expressing their feelings and ideas. They are also identified with Islamic identity, but not in the forms of what the Islamic revolution had brought for them. Actually, it was a new identity which is identified by the Greens leaders and reformist movements and under the banner of the Green Movement.

Furthermore, "them" are those treacherous and dictators with furious spiritual who don't hesitate to kill or torture their opposites. They are leaders of the Islamic revolution, allege radicalism thought of Islam. They are specified by injustice, lying, atrocity and brutality against civilians during the news and programs.

Evidently, the most emphasize has been in violation of human rights and freedom of speech as the obvious anti-norms in Iran. The illegal actions and all violations committed by the Islamic ruler has been brought up to challenge the legitimacy of the Islamic system, both politically and religiously. The state's lack of legitimacy and

internal disintegration and division of the Iran's officials, suggest the fragility of the state.

Stat's legitimacy crisis, on the other hand, paves the way for either civil disobedience, nor legitimized opposite movements that could in turn entice neutral people's sympathy as well as international society. Therefore, the BBCPTV with underscoring the inefficient and illegitimacy of the Islamic system, has legitimized opposite movements and reinforce public acceptance of new social norms, introduced by Green Movement's leaders.

In sum, the BBCPTV has endeavored to influence on a collective understanding of current situation and creation of "we feeling" with identified in-group against out-group. Although, the BBCPTV has not innovated the new norms, but with reminding the wide range of anti-norms measures by the Islamic government, has increased the sociability of the new norms that is neither Islamic nor Iranian identity but something between them, had been created by the Green leaders.

### **5.3.2 Research Question #2: How the BBCPTV tries to construct Iranian social knowledge, identities and norms to provide Green Movement's demands and goals?**

This question was intended to explore whether the BBCPTV's discourse is in probable companionship with Green Movement's demand by interpreting the new images of social and political identities and norms.

Considering the Green Movement's demands and goals, what is more prominent is nullification of the election and holding a new election that the BBCPTV play its part in



this regard by highlighting the fraud in election. Abolishing the vetting process by the “Guardian Council” and “formation of an independent election commission” is the second demands of the leaders. As it is discussed in chapter 4, qualification of candidates must be confirmed by the Guardian Council, which is composed of six Islamic Faqihs. Request for establishment of independent committee means separation of religion from politics that is obviously, underling of principal of “Velayat-e-Faqih”. Request for banning the use of Friday prayers sermons, for issuing illegal and anti-religious orders by the clerics, is a clear example of the Greens’ dissident with political Islam.

Regarding the discourse analysis, the BBCPTV repeatedly reminds the efficiency, injustice and illegal actions by Islamic system and not only put the Islamic identity of the Islamic government under the question, but also identified the roots of current problems in the Islamic structure of the system and principal of “Velayat-e-Faqih”. Therefore, the thought of separation of religion of politics has been provided by the BBCPTV discourse.

In another part, the Green’s leader, explicitly has pointed out the illegality of “Special Clerical Court” that confirm injustice in the structure of the Iranian government and administration. This issue in turn, challenges the clerical establishment that for the Greens, in the light of current events, have no religious and political legitimacy. As it is discussed in details, delegitimizing of the Islamic government, politically and religiously, has been one of the main editorial guidelines of the BBCPTV.

Asking for releasing all the political prisoners, abolishing censorship and filtering, freedom of speech and press and satellite channels, freedom of assembly and rallies are

all confirming the violation of human rights and freedom of speech by the Iranian government that has been frequently emphasized by the BBCPTV as the political and social anti-norms.

### **5.3.3 Research Question #3: What is the political landscape of Iran constructed by the BBCPTV's framing, from birth to decline of Green Movement?**

This question was meant to explore the essence of BBCPTV's discourse and that frame, which political landscape of Iran has been identified within it. Regarding the theme/subtheme of the news and programs that covered the aftermath of the 2009 presidential election, the BBCPTV depicted the Islamic system as the follows:

1. An Islamic state that Islamic concepts, like justice and honesty, has no sense in it.
2. An Islamic state with non-Islamic structure due to violation of Islamic law.
3. An Islamic state that violates human rights and freedom of speech.
4. An Islamic state which has no political and religious legitimacy.

The constructed landscape not only delegitimize the Islamic government on the other hand get legitimize to Green Movement or any reformist movements.

## **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

Have no doubt, after 75 years of broadcasting in Iran, from short wave radio in 1941 to settle a professional Persian TV in 2009, and role-playing in the historical moment of Iran, the BBC Persian service has gotten the political pulse of Iran. The noticeable point is that it is accused by both Iran's leaders, before and after the 1979 revolution of

interference in Iran's internal policy, however the BBC directors, except in some cases, has denied such an accusations.

However, the present research was an attempt to show the role that the BBCPTV played in Iran, when this country was at a crossroad of history, but it most likely raises two questions which would provide necessity of further research. 1) What was the objective effect of the BBCPTV on Iran's Green Movement? And 2) what has been motivated the Britain for the constant present of the BBC in Iran's political space and particularly in the 2009 presidential election?

As a matter of fact, the findings of the present research as a qualitative research, exposed the BBC biased position toward covering the news, as well as revealed the alignment of the BBCPTV with the Green Movement's goals and demands, without considering its objective impact or influence on the Green Movements. Regarding the first question, further research in order to achieve observable results needs a quantitative research about the exact rate of BBC's audiences after the 2009 election besides interview with the pro-Green movement and ways of getting information about the leaders' announcement or date and place of demonstrations; of course access to such information is too difficult, due to the security condition of Iran.

Providing the second question also additional studies must be conducted to explore Iran-Britain relations and Britain's foreign policy toward Iran. Considering the BBC as the Britain propaganda machine makes the role of "soft power" and "media policy" more prominent. However the present research has a little hint in chapter 1 to this issue implicitly, but the future research with concentrated on relations could reach to tangible results for the readers.

## 5.5 Summary

Social movements in a simple definition are intentional organized groups with collective identity, struggling to achieve a common goal through collective action. However, scholars had considered the conditions that a social movement is most likely to happen, but the advent of communication revolution led scholars to shift their concerns to the impact of new media as a low cost tool in shaping social movements and collective actions. It facilitates access to information and increase opportunities to engage in public speech and enhanced ability to undertake collective behaviors. (Shirky, 2011)

It is obvious that gaining positive media coverage can have an important influence on forming and mobilization of citizen by legitimizing the movement's goals. Although it is hard to imagine social movements without media coverage, but it is noticeable that some of this movement are also newsworthy for journalists and the owner of news media, depend on their specific "media policy". It clarifies the issue that why certain events get coverage while the others do not.

The Green Movement as the case study in the present research, is in highly attention not due to most important political event after the 1979 revolution, but also regarding the extensive use of social media in this event. Even it was acknowledged by some scholars like Picerkings (2011) as a catalyst for the beginning of the Arab Spring that has been labeled as "Facebook revolution" and civil war in Libya and Syria and revolutionary movements in Yemen and Bahrain. The cyber activism surrounding the Iranian protests was unprecedented in so far as the Green Movement was dubbed by western media as "twitter revolution."

This label attracted scholar's attention to the role of social media in Iran's Green Movement. Some considered it as a "new opening avenue for democracy in Iran" (Bailly, 2012) that catalyst mobilization of massive protests (Harlow, 2011) and enhance the collective identity among pro-Green movement and help to create a discursive opportunity (Haghighat & Mansouri, 2010). Although many scholars praised the role of communication technology, but noticeable theory reject the decisive and positive effects of social media, due to limited access to information transmitted and governmental control of society to suppress political dissents. (Golkar, 2011) However, in contrast to the Islamic Republic, this control was not absolute; in fact, satellite channels challenged the state's monopoly over the means of communication and the Green reformists were able to circulate competing narratives and images through these channels, meanwhile the access to Iran's media was impossible for them.

Actually, the satellite channels, as an undisputed challenger to Iran's media, have an effective role in interpreting the status quo. These channels that are provided by multi-platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Instagram and other social media, support the information process by giving room to underreported topics and open up a space for more debate and critical discussions and civic engagement.

Regarding social movement as a departure from the "collective identity" to "collective behavior" in this research, prominent some effective factors in social behaviors. Accordingly, what leads collective identity to collective behavior never achieve through just informing people, like what happen through exchange of information via social media. It will happen when: 1) there is shared understanding of current problem, 2) the

movement's ideology and strategy are identified and more important when 3) the movement is legitimized.

Concentration on constructivist approach in this research and regarding the role of social identity and norms in individual's behaviors, made the role of media more important in social and collective behaviors. In this framework, media do have influence on social behaviors if be able to effect social identity and norms via dominance of social knowledge.

Since the BBCPTV had been considered as the research case study to evaluate its role in construction of Iranian Green Movement as a collective behavior, considering constructivism approach, the author had to figure out the role that the BBC had played in construction of Iranian social identity and norms.

Based on research analysis, the BBCPTV, through the news and programs, has attempted to show the certainty of fraud in the election with engaging public opinion in battle of different idea and present a collective definition of the current problem. Collective definition of problem is expected to transfer to collective identity when there is we-ness and we-feeling among individuals.

Therefore, in the next stage, the Greens and the leaders of reformist movement were identified by this service. To that end, the BBCPTV has portrayed "we" against "them" and strongly has emphasized on confrontation of pro-Greens Movement with Iran's authorities. The most important point of research findings is that BBCPTV has attempted to legitimize the Green Movement with delegitimizing the Iranian government.

No doubt the legitimacy impacts on community practice. The citizens will probably riot against injustice and inefficiency that are signs of legitimacy crisis of dominant powers. Since the state's legitimacy have their origins in socially constructed values and norms, accepted by the citizens, thus, social and political anti-norms, carrying by the authorities, not only delegitimize the dominant power, but also makes them vulnerable to overthrow or collapse.

The significant point revealed by the BBCPTV's discourse analysis is focusing on violations of human rights by Iranian authorities on a large scale, referring to violation of freedom of speech and illegal action of the governors, violating the precepts of Islam and emphasize on the dictatorship nature of Islamic Republic. In fact, the BBCPTV by focusing on this issues, not only delegitimize the government politically, but also put the religious legitimacy of the Islamic system under the serious question. And in an overall view, it seems that the BBCPTV's focuses attention (framing) toward construction of the Iranian Green Movement was guided in right direction.

Social movements are existence and fades away after a while, but influence all manner of social and political beliefs; no matter fail or success. What happened to Iran's presidential election in 2009, and its turbulent aftermath, immersed the country in the years-long political crisis till now. For the first time since the 1979 Revolution, mass compliances were translated into massive public demonstrations and a political movement that challenged the legitimacy of Iran's public figures and basically the foundational rule of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although mismanagement of the movement coupled with political structure of Iran, turn the street protests to slacktivism,

but effect of transnational TVs and particularly the BBCPTV on political landscape of Iran is not ignorable.



## REFERENCES

- Ahmadinejad Wins Iran Presidential Election (2009, June 13), *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8098305.stm>.
- Albrow, M. (1990). *Max Weber's Construction of Social Theory*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Alex, J. A. (2011). Eyewitness Accounts and Political claims: Transnational responses to the 2009 postelection Protests in Iran. Columbia University.
- Alexaner, A., Aouragh, M. (2014). Egypt's Unfinished Revolution: The Role of the Media Revisited. *International Journal of Communication*, UK, 890–915. Retrieved from <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/2520/1109>.
- Alikhah, F. (2008). The Politics of Satellite Television in Iran. In M. Semati (ed.), *Media, Culture, and Society in Iran* (PP.95–96). Oxford: Taylor and Francis.
- Anderson, G.L. & Herr, K.G. (2007). *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*. SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412956215>.
- Anugwom, E. (2007). Social Movements, Sociology Of. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412956215.n88>.
- Bäckstrand, K. (2003). Civic Science for Sustainability: Reframing the Role of Experts, Policy-Makers and Citizen in Environmental Governance. *Global Environmental Politics*. 3(4), 24-41.
- Bailly, J. (2012). The Impact of Social Media on Social Movements: A Case Study of the 2009 Iranian Green Movement and the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Washington State University.
- Barker, A. (2009). Iran Threatens Britain with Slap in the Mouth. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2009/s2782489.htm>.
- Bayanat Dar Jam-e Kasiri Az Basijiyan Keshvar: A speech to a large crowd of the nation's Basij (2009, November 25), *The Center for Preserving and Publishing the Works of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei*. Retrieved from [http://farsi.khamenei.ir/newspart\\_index?tid=1016#8452](http://farsi.khamenei.ir/newspart_index?tid=1016#8452).

- BBC (Producer). (2014, Jan 14). Conversation with Sadegh Saba [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4e71-lAsagw>.
- BBC and Media Vacuum in Iran (2009, June 30), *Iran America Forum*. Retrieved from <http://www.iranamerica.com/forum/showthread.php?t=8855>.
- BBC Editorial Guideline. (n.d.). Retrieved from BBC website: <http://bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines>.
- BBC Persian staff face Iranian intimidation (2012, February 3), *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/03/bbc-persian-staff-iranian-intimidation>.
- Benford, R.D., David A., & Snow, D.A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.
- Berinsky, A.J. (2007). America at War-Public Opinion during Wartime, from World War II to Iraq.
- Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic interactionism, Perspective and Methods*. University of California Press, Ltd.
- Blumer, H. (1971). Social Problems as Collective Behavior, Source: Social Problems, Published by: University of California Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. 18(3), 298-306.
- Blumer, H. (1969). Social Movements. In B. McLaughlin (ed.), *Studies in Social Movements. A social psychological perspective* (PP.8-29). New York: The Free Press.
- Blumer, H. (1962). Society as Symbolic Interaction. In A. M. Rose (ed.), *Human Behavior and Social Process* (PP. 92-179). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge UN. Press.
- Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999) *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

- Cialdini, R. D. (2003). Crafting normative messages to protect the environment. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(4), 105–109.
- Clover, J. (2009). AIB Hands Out 2009 Awards. Retrieved from <http://www.broadbandtvnews.com/2009/11/04/aib-hands-out-2009-awards/>.
- Craib, I. (1997). *Classical Social Theory: An introduction to the thought of Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Simmel*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Davies, J. C. (1962). *Toward A Theory of Revolution*. American Sociological Review.
- Davies, J.C. (1971). *When Men Revolt-and Why*. N. Y., Free Press.
- Dirt and Dust: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Term for Those Protesting against the Iranian Election Results (2009, June 29), *The New York times*. Retrieved from [https://schott.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/29/dirt-and-dust/?\\_r=0](https://schott.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/29/dirt-and-dust/?_r=0).
- Donatella, D.P. & Diani, M. (2006). *Social Movements, an Introduction*. USA. Blackwell.
- Dunne, T., Kurki, M., & Smith, S. (2010). *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, Second Edition, P. 178.
- Easley, D. (2010). Chapter 19 cascading behavior in networks.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*.
- Esfandiari, G. (2012). Nothing Comes Between Iranians And Their Satellite Dishes, Not Even The Police. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty.
- Eyerman, R., & Jamison, A. (1991). *Social Movements. A Cognitive Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2001) *Language and Power* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1999) Linguistic and Intertextuality Analysis within Discourse Analysis. In A. Jaworski & N. Coupland (eds.), *The Discourse Reader*. London, UK: Routledge.

- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman, p. 26.
- Figenschou, T.U. (2013). *Al Jazeera and the Global Media Landscape: The South is Talking Back*. P. 14.
- Festinger, L. (1954). A Theory of Social Comparison Processes, *Human Relation*. doi: 10.1177/001872675400700202.
- Fischer, F. (2013). Cascades of Collective Action? Analyzing the Impact of Protest History and Social Media on Regime Change in the Context of the 2011 Uprisings in Egypt and Syria. Center for Global Politics, Freie Universität Berlin Publisher: Klaus Segbers.
- Fitch, K L., & Sanders, R. E. (2005). *Handbook of language and social interaction*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers Mahwah, New Jersey, London.
- Freeman, J., & Johnson, V. (1999) *Waves of protest: Social movements since the sixties*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gahnoog, Y. (2013). States and Revolutionary Communications, on the Role of Al Jazeera in the Tunisian Revolution of 2010-2011. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/openview/7f430bba4b9d29696cec2b0bf654d0df/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>.
- Gamson, W. A., & Wolfsfeld, G. (1993). Movements and media as interacting systems. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Sage Publication, (528), 114-125.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Garrett, R.K. (2006). *Protest in an Information Society: A Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICTs*.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 25-6.
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World is watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Regents University of Colombia.

- Gladwell, M. (2010). Why the revolution will not be tweeted.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Golkar, S. (2011). *Liberation or Suppression Technologies? The Internet, the Green Movement and the regime in Iran*. Stanford University, California, USA.
- Griffin, E. A. (2006). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*. London, Sage Publication Ltd, P. 21.
- GÜÇLÜ, I. (2014). Karl Marx and Ralf Dahrendorf: A Comparative Perspective on Class Formation and Conflict.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *Structural Transformation of the Public sphere*. Translated by Thomas Burger, The MIT Press, and Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Hall, S. (1982). The rediscovery of 'ideology': return of the repressed in media studies. In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran, and J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Culture, Society, and the Media* (PP.56-90). London: Routledge.
- Harlow, S. (2011). Social media and social movements: Facebook and an online Guatemalan justice movement that moved offline. The University of Texas at Austin, USA.
- Hjelmar, U. (1996). Constructivist Analysis and Movement Organizations: Conceptual Clarifications, *Acta Sociologica*, Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd. 39(2), 169-186.
- Hjelmar, U. (1995). *The Political Practice of Environmental Organizations*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Hoffer, E. (1951). *True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*. New York: American Library, Harper and Row.
- Hunt, SA., Scott, H., & Benford, R. (2004). Collective Identity, Solidarity, and Commitment. In D. Snow, S. Soule, H. Kriesi (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (433-60). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

- Iran Condemns Oxford University Scholarship Honoring Woman Killed (2009, November 11), *Fox news*. Retrieved from <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2009/11/11/iran-condemns-oxford-university-scholarship-honoring-woman-killed.html>.
- Iran: Foreign Media Supporting “Hooligans” (2009, June 17), *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/06/17/iran.journalists/>.
- Iranian Protesters Mostly Unfazed by Government Warning (2009, June 17), *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/06/17/iran.elections.rallies/index.html?iref=24hours>.
- Jackson, P. Th., Daniel H., & Nexon, D. N. (2002). Whence Causal Mechanisms? A Comment on Legro. *Dialogue IO* 1.1.
- Jamming Is a Capacity (2011, February 28), *khabar online*. Retrieved from <http://tiny.cc/ty1zmw>.
- Karagiannis, E. (2009). Political Islam in Central Asia: The Challenge of Hizb Ut-Tahrir.
- Kazemian, M. (2009). Mousavi a modern leader. *Rooz*, Retrieved from <http://www.roozonline.com/english/news/newsitem/article/2009/october/07//mousavi-amodern-leader.html>.
- Kerbaj, R. (2009). Diplomats uneasy at Neda Soltan being honoured by Queen’s College, Oxford. *The Times*. London. Retrieved from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/diplomats-uneasy-at-neda-soltan-being-honoured-by-queens-college-oxford-2s9mdrt7ck0>.
- Khatami, Karroubi join Mousavi's Green movement (2009, August 18), *Press TV*. Retrieved from <http://www.presstv.ir/pop/Print/?id=103859 E 1L1 JUTV>.
- Kunelius, R., & Reunanen, E. (2011). Media in political power: A Parsonian view on the differentiated Mediatization of Finnish decision makers. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, Doi: 10.1177/1940161211424207, 17(1), 56–75.
- Kyoung An, S., & Gower, K. K. (2009). How do the news media frame crises? A content Analysis of Crisis News Coverage. *Public Relations Review*, 35(2), 107-112.
- Lauer, R. (1976). Defining Social Problems: Public and Professional Perspective. *Social Movement*, 24(1), 122-130.

- Lazarsfeld, P. F., & Merton, R. K. (1996). Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action. *Mass Media*, Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.
- Lindsey, R.A. (2013). What the Arab Spring Tells Us About the Future of Social Media in Revolutionary Movements.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). The world outside and the pictures in our heads, *Public opinion*.
- Loader, B.D. (2008). Social movements and new media. Wiley, 2(6).
- Mackey, R. (2012). Crisis in Syria Looks Very Different on Satellite Channels Owned by Russia and Iran. Retrieved from <https://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/10/crisis-in-syria-looks-very-different-on-satellite-channels-owned-by-russia-and-iran/>.
- Macovei, M. (2004). *Freedom of expression: A guide to the implementation of article 10 of the European convention on human rights* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed).
- Majd, H. (2010). Think Again: Iran's Green Movement, It's a Civil Rights Movement, Not a Revolution. Retrieved from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/06/think-again-irans-green-movement/>.
- Mamay, S. (2010). Theories of social movements and their current. Retrieved from <http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/csacpub/russian/mamay.html>.
- Marchant, J. (2014). The Revolution Will Be Televised: State and Satellite TV in Iran.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. (2001). Dynamics of contention. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 331-333.
- McCarthy, J., & Zald, M. (1987). Social Movements in an Organizational Society. P. 20.
- McCombs, M. (2005). A Look at Agenda Setting: Past, Present and Future. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14616700500250438>.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.
- McQuail, D. (2002). The influence and effects of mass media, P. 9.

- Melucci, A. (1996). *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge University Press.
- Melucci, A. (1995). *The Process of Collective Identity*. Temple University Press.
- Melucci, A. (1989). *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. London, Hutchinson.
- Melucci, A. (1988). *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge Social studies.
- Melucci, A. (1988). Getting Involved. Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements. In B. Klandermans, H. Kriesi, & S. Tarrow (eds.), *From Structure to Action* (PP. 329-48). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Melucci, A. (1981). Ten Hypotheses for the Analysis of New Movements. In D. Pinto (ed.), *Contemporary Italian Sociology, Cambridge*, Cambridge University Press.
- Mousavi on the Green Path of Hope (2009, September 5), *Frontline*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2009/09/mousavi-on-the-green-path-of-hope.html>.
- Newman, N. (2009). The rise of social media and its impact on mainstream journalism. Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies, university of Oxford, Reuters Institute for mainstream journalism.
- Nye, J. (1990). "Soft War," *Foreign Policy*. 80, 53-71.
- Obama Says Iran Should Not Suppress People's Voices (2009, June 16), *Reuters*, Retrieved from [www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE55F4TK20090616](http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE55F4TK20090616).
- Oliver, P. E., & Johnston, H. (2000). What a Good Idea! Frames and Ideologies in Social Movement Research, Mobilization. P. 9.
- Onuf, N. G. (1989). *World of Our Making, Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*. Rutledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York. Retrieved from [http://www.helsinki.fi/eci/Events/Nicholas%20Onuf\\_Rule%20and%20Rules%20%204-2-14.pdf](http://www.helsinki.fi/eci/Events/Nicholas%20Onuf_Rule%20and%20Rules%20%204-2-14.pdf).
- Padin, J. (2005). Don't exaggerate bad news. USA Today.



- Pakulski, J. (1991). *Social Movements, the Politics of Moral Protest*. Melbourne, Longman Cheshire Pty Limited.
- President Joins Sea of Celebrations: Election a Blow to World Oppressors (2009, June 15), *Keyhan International*. Retrieved from [www.kayhanintl.com/](http://www.kayhanintl.com/).
- Protest at Iran's 'evil UK' claim (2009, June 19), *BBC*. Retrieved from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/8109303.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/8109303.stm).
- Rein M., & Schön, DA. (1993). Reframing Policy Discourse. In F. Fischer, & J. Forester (eds.), *The argumentative turn in policy analysis, planning* (PP. 145-166). London: Duke University Press.
- Reis, R. (2008). How Brazilian and North American Newspapers Frame the Stem Cell Research Debate. *Science Communication*, 316–334.
- Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2006). *Readme First for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. Sage Publication, P.137.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: cognitive development in social context*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ronen Palan, R. (2000). A world of their making: an evaluation of the constructivist critique in International Relations, *Review of International Studies*. 26(4), 575-598.
- Rubin, M., & Hewstone, M. (1998). Social identity theory's self-esteem hypothesis: A review and some suggestions for clarification. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2, 40-62.
- Scheufele, D.A., & Tewksbury, D. (2006). Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication*.
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of Media Effect. *International Communication Association*.
- Seib, Ph. (2014). Media Evolution on the Eve of the Arab Spring. In L.Hudson, A. Iskandar, & M. Kirk, (ed.), *New Media and Public Diplomacy in the New Arab World* (pp.181-192). Retrieved from [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9781137403155\\_11](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9781137403155_11).

- Seib, Ph. (2010). Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era.
- Seib, Ph. (2008). How the new global media are reshaping world politics.
- Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). Framing European politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News. *Journal of Communication*.
- Seventy percent of people access to the satellite (2014, April 5), *Tabnak*. Retrieved from <http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/390520/70>.
- Several Killed near Pro-Mousavi Rally (2009, June 16), *Press TV*, Retrieved from [www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir).
- Shirazi, N. (2009). In Fraud We Trust? *Foreign Policy Journal*, Retrieved from <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2009/06/25/in-fraud-we-trust/3/>.
- Shirky, C. (2011). The political power of social media. Georgia Institute of Technology College of Computing.
- Shirky, C. (2008). Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations.
- Sheedy, C.S. (2011). Social Media for Social Change: A Case Study of Social Media Use in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.
- Sohrabi-Haghighat, M., & Mansouri, Sh. (2010). "Where Is My Vote?" ICT Politics in the Aftermath of Iran's Presidential Election. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*, 8(1), 24 – 41.
- Smelser, Nil J. (1962). *Theory of Collective Behaviour*. London, Routledge Kegan Paul, p. 2.
- Smelser, N.J. (2013). *Theory Collective Behavior*. P.10.
- Smith, HJ, Pettigrew, TF, Pippin, GM., & Bialosiewicz, S. (2012). Relative Deprivation: A Theoretical and Meta-Analytic Review. Doi: 10.1177/1088868311430825.
- Soroush, A. K. (2010). The goals of Iran's Green Movement. Retrieved from: <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Global-Viewpoint/2010/0106/Abdolkarim-Soroush-The-goals-of-Iran-s-Green-Movement/%28page%29/3>.

- Steven, B. (2001). Satellite Television in Iran: Prohibition, Imitation and Reform. *Middle Eastern Studies*. 25-38.
- Stone, B., & Cohen, N. (2009). Social Networks Spread Defiance Online.
- Tafesh, A.Q. (2012). Iran's Green movement: Reality and Aspirations. Aljazeera center for study.
- Takeyh, R. (2009). *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- The BBC in the Arab World (2008, March 3), *Press Office*. Retrieved from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2008/03\\_march/03/arabic\\_worldservice.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2008/03_march/03/arabic_worldservice.shtml).
- Tilly, C. (2006). *Identities, Boundaries and Social Ties*. Rutledge.
- Tilly, C. (1984). Social Movements and National Politics. In C. Bright and S. Harding (eds.), *State making and Social Movements* (PP. 297–317). Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press.
- Tilly, C. (1978). *From Mobilization to Revolution: Readings*. Mass, Addison-Wesley.
- Timeline: 2009 Iran Presidential Election (2009, June 19), CNN. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/06/16/iran.elections.timeline/>.
- Toch, H. (1966). *The Social Psychology of Social Movements*. London. Methuen.
- Touraine, A. (1981). *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Touraine, A. (1985). An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements. *Social Research*, 52(4), 749-787.
- Turner, M. (2009). BBC Persian News Top Hot Bird Nods.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Chapter 5. Discourse, power and access. Discourse and Power*. Palgrave MacMillan, P.65.

- Van Dik, T. A. (2001). 18 Critical Discourse Analysis. Black Well Publisher, the Handbook of Discourse Analysis. 349-371.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Power and the News Media. University of Amsterdam.
- Violence against demonstrators marks new presidential term in Iran (2009, June 15), *Amnesty International*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2009/06/violence-against-demonstrators-marks-new-presidential-term-iran-20090615/>.
- Vliegthart, R., & Walgrave, S. (2012). The interdependency of mass media and social movements. P. 16.
- Wardrop, M. (2009). Iran Condemns University of Oxford over Nead Agha-Soltan Scholarship. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/6542019/Iran-condemns-University-of-Oxford-over-Neda-Agha-Soltan-scholarship.html>.
- Weaver, D. H. (2007). Thoughts on Agenda Setting, and Priming. Wiley Online Library, Journal of Communication.
- Webster, B. (2010, February 1). Letter from Iranian Embassy to Professor Paul Madden. *The Times*.
- Wendt, A. (1999). Social Theory of International Politics. Cambridge Studies in *International relations*.
- Wendt, A. (1994). Collective Identity Formation and the International State. American Political Science Review, 396-397.
- Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics. International Organization, 46(2), 391-425.
- Whittington, R. (2010). *Giddens, Structuration Theory and strategy as practice*.
- Wilson, J. (1973). Introduction to Social Movements.
- Working for VOA and BBC is Equal to Aiding the Regime's Enemies (2011, October 21), *Alef News*. Retrieved from <http://tiny.cc/alefnews>.

Yu, X. (2004). *Cultural Factors in International Relations*. Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXI. P. 73.