

The Application of Causal Layered Analysis to Understand the Present Conditions and Possible Futures of Media & Politics in Iran

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Outline

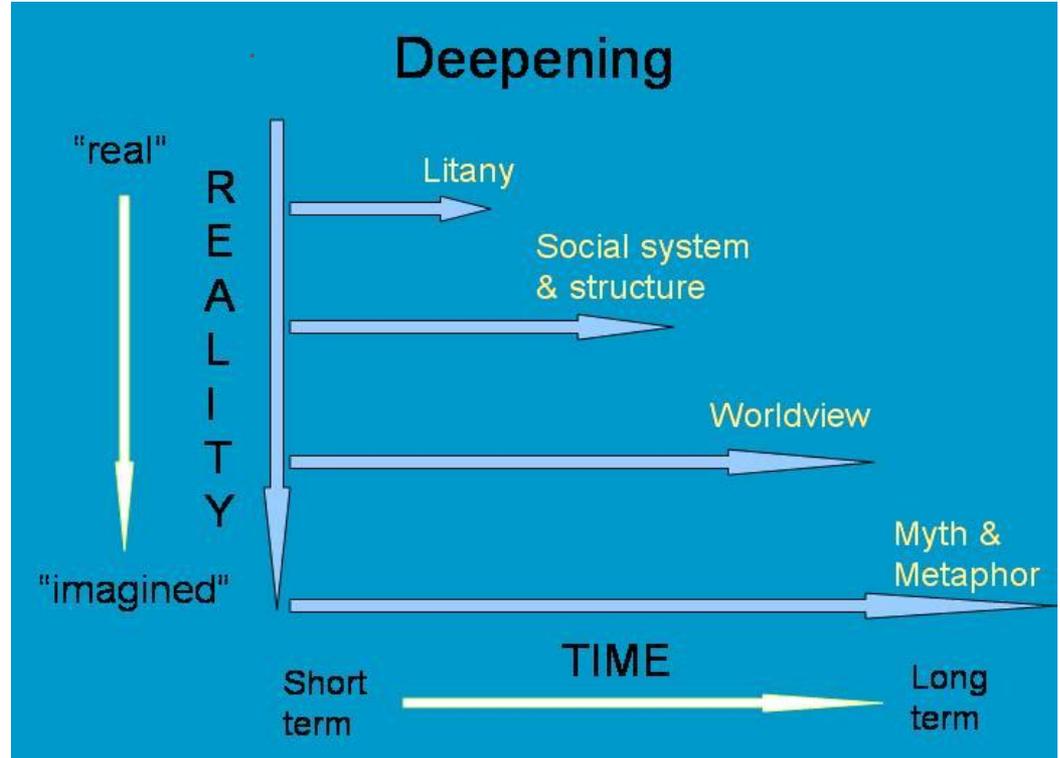
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Introduction: Media and Politics in Iran

- Media and politics are tightly interconnected with each other in Iran.
- Whether in Pahlavi era or after the islamic revolution in 1978-79, all different governments have aimed to control the media sphere by different means.
- Although the official media policies are appointed by the state regime in Iran, alternative actors have succeeded to affect media politics in different dimensions.
- We apply causal layered analysis to understand the status quo in superficial layers, to identify different actors and their influence on the current situation, and to recognize the hidden discourses and myths to construct the possible futures of media politics in Iran.

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)

1. Litany: the most obvious and visible layer
2. Social cause: historical factors and the role of different actors
3. Worldview: the discourse and worldview behind the issue which legitimates it
4. Myth: deep stories and archetypes behind the issue



Litany: Deconstructing the Relationship between Media and Politics in Iran

Key elements	Mainstream Media	Alternative Media
Media Ownership	State ownership (Media infrastructures like ASPs, Broadcasting, Press) National Data Network (local intranet instead of global internet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private Ownership (Press Media) - Foreign Ownership i.e Social Media (Internet)
Media Control (censorship, filtering, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By Government (Media license and detention, censorship, ban and filtering, parasites) - By Commercial Interest (restrictions on broadband infrastructure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VPN and Other Proxies (Internet) - Underground Media Market (Press) - Illegal Satellite channels (Broadcasting)
Media Content Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditionalist - Islamist (with a Specified Narrative) - Anti-Western 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secular - Modernist - Pro-Western - Semi-Nationalist

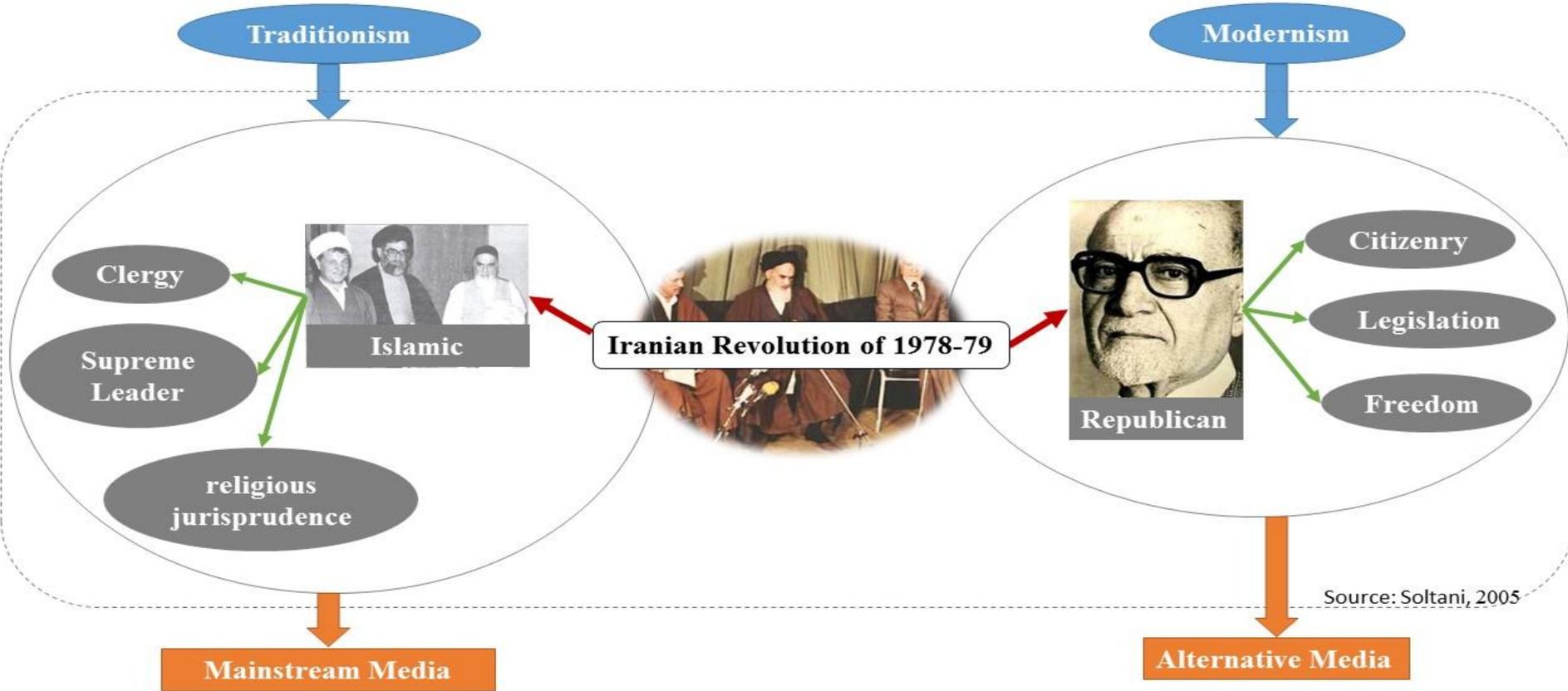
Social Causes: Semi-totalitarian regime and its dissidents

Actor	- The state regime (Key actor)
Influential period	- 1978-present
Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promoting socialist economic values (and some liberal values and concepts (like entrepreneurship) in recent years (particularly in the mid of 1990 decade)- Promoting islamic and revolutionary values- Propagating the idea of enmity with western countries, specifically US- Mobilizing public mass against pro-western elites
Influence on media politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dominating media ownership- Dominating media content production- Controlling media by censorship/Filtering and other suppression means- Handling key media infrastructures like ASPs or Broadcasting- Banning alternative infrastructure like Satellite TV or Private ASPs

Social Cause: Semi-totalitarian regime and the its dissidents

Actors	Market	Civil Society	Technology
Influential period	-1989-present	-1997-present	-2005-present
Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The failure of socialist economic policies - Advertising - The rise of privatization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The endeavors for a more diverse media sphere - The aims to give voice to voiceless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The internet and its wide access in Iran - Illegal expansion of satellite TV and radio channels
Influence on media politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of private press media - Emergence of a limited competition in media market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of press media with independency as much as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of alternative media platforms like foreign satellite persian TVs - The emergence and popularity of user generated contents (UGCs) like social media, citizen journalism etc.

Worldview: Controversy between Traditionalism and Modernism



Narrative: A wise king educating the unworthy populace



This newspaper is to educate populace

Mirza Taghi Khan
Chancellor of Iran (1848-1851)
Founder of the second official newspaper

- Education is the most avowed common notation among Iranian intellectuals at the late of early modern era in Qajar Dynasty (1789-1925)
- They have provided a dialogue between Islam and modernism, supported by various adaptive perspective
- In the late of 19th century, they romantically followed the project of modernization by pedagogy, until the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911).
- After the defeat in progress, the military coup of Reza Shah (the Founder of Pahlavi DYNasty) changed the romanticism regarding to education; however, the project of injecting modernity through authoritarian modernization stands still.
- Official education, confronted with traditional schools (Maktab Khaneh), was one of the most necessary tools in this era.

Metaphor: Training the populace



Cinema is one of the civilization manifestation which have to serve to educate people

First speech of Ayatollah Khomeini after return to Iran (1979)

- Islamic Revolution of 1979, just changed some marginal elements:
- Who have the legitimacy to educate: Clergies or their representatives
- What must be taught: Traditional or Revolutionary Islamic discourse
- How one can educate unwise populace: by official education system as definitely as the media contents production or media platform controls by state ownership or censorship

A Vision of Possible Futures

Scenario (I): Media Struggle	Scenario (II): Diverse Media	Scenario (III): Surveillance Media
Semi-totalitarian state remains	More democratic state emerge	State grows to more totalitarian regime
Oligopoly media market with state regulatory dominance, controlling media content and infrastructures	More competitive media market with multi stakeholders specially on infrastructures, regulatory state without ownership	Media market reduces to less state competitor from different state sectors, no public or private sector particularly in infrastructures
Fragile civil society	More powerful civil society	Less Powerful civil society
No evolutionary transformation in media technology	Some revolutionary transformation occurs, to some extent free of state control or surveillance	More surveillance technology serve state and private sectors to block or filter alternative voices
Traditionalism Vs Modernism	Modernism discourse predominance	Traditionalism discourse supremacy

Conclusion

- Despite the so-called colorful media sphere and diverse platforms and productions at the litany level, the key actor which shapes the media sphere in Iran is still the state regime, though the influential role of new actors in the recent years is observable.
- Regarding present conditions, the essential contradiction between traditionalism and modernism, discursively and objectively, shape the short-term futures of the relationship between media and politics in Iran.
- Considering the long-term transformations, the myth of “education” remains unchanged, unless the scenario of “diverse media” overcomes the other plausible alternatives.

Thank you!

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