

Discourse and Identity in Iran's Foreign Policy

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Abstract

This article tries to apply discourse analysis, as a research framework, to Iran's foreign policy. Discourse analysis of foreign policy mostly focuses on language and rhetoric used by policy makers. Discourse analysis is not only related to comments and speeches made by Iranian officials, it also puts to test behavior which takes place in social context.

To this end, the author explores main political discourses shaping Iranian identity and foreign policy behavior since the Islamic Revolution. These discourses impose a particular revolutionary language on Iranian foreign policy, and give meanings to the country's foreign policy behavior. This article assumes Iran's foreign policy, initially and before starting its interactions with the international community, has been subject to revolutionary discourses as major resource for the country's definition of its identity and interests. This discourse assumed to be a revolutionary identity: it is occasionally strengthened or moderated due to aggressive or non-aggressive normative environment at the international level. The discursive context at both the domestic and international levels will help us understand confrontational and non-confrontational relations between Iran and the western countries in post revolutionary era.

Keywords: Social Discourses, Constructivism, Identity, Articulation Foreign Policy, Aggressive and non-Aggressive Environment

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Introduction

Iranian foreign policy behavior is difficult to understand due to its normative and revolutionary dimensions. In order to explain Iranian foreign policy in post-revolutionary era, one should try to understand two important variants: first, basic discourses of the Islamic Revolution, and second, the nature of international normative environment. To this end, the paper applies discourse analysis as a helpful means to demonstrate how Islamic Revolution's identity is socially constructed. Discourse approach enables us to explain the sets of meanings and values embedded in Iranian identity. A combination of discourse analysis and constructivist approach has been used to study Iran's foreign policy behavior. The normative discourses of Iranian foreign policy mainly originate from political Islam, Shia religion, the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, speeches of Imam Khomeini and historical background. Though, Islam and Shiism play a primary role in constructing Iranian identity and geopolitical factors, it plays a secondary role in shaping interests of the country. That is why the issue of identity take precedence over national interest in Iranian foreign policy. Therefore, due to the strong role played by the Islamic identity in Iran's post-revolutionary foreign policy, it has undergone a dramatic shift from the pursuit of the material national interest to ethical, ideological and spiritual norms that shape the principles of the country's foreign policy (Dehshiri and Majidi, 2008-09:112).

In fact, Revolutionary states often do not engage in cost-benefit analysis that other states do. The main goal of such states is to pursue



their revolutionary mission and to construct a particular identity based on certain set of norms and values (Takeyh, Ray, 2012). Hence, in order to provide an appropriate explanation of Iranian foreign policy, it is necessary to analyze it within a discursive context. This discursive context considered as a basis for Iranian identity and interest imposes a particular revolutionary language on the country's foreign policy. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, a new set of normative discourses affected political rhetoric of the country's foreign policy and transformed Iranian identity from a status quo pro-western to a revolutionary anti-western one. These discursive resources shape the country's foreign policy behavior and differentiate it from the rest of the world. Thus, "the shift of a state's foreign policy discourse may indicate the shift of its actual {identity and} foreign policy practice" (Yongtao , 2010:98).

This article assumes Iran's foreign policy, to some extent, has been subject to revolutionary discourses to manifest its identity and interests during the first couple of years after the revolution before resuming its interactions with the international community. This identity (at the domestic level) is mostly strengthened or moderated through aggressive or non-aggressive normative environment at the international level. In fact, the research argues that the Islamic Republic of Iran, initially, makes its priorities based on its domestic social discourses which shape the country's post-revolutionary identity. However, this discourse-oriented policy has been either radicalized or moderated due to the West's confrontational or cooperative policy toward Iran. Continuation of the process of identity formation, created a social context in which the mutual misunderstandings between Iran and the western countries have been increased. The paper investigates these discourses that have directly affected political relations between Iran and the western countries, leading to an ongoing conflict between the two since the Islamic Revolution.

A study of discursive resources of Iranian foreign policy help us



understand Iran's support for the Syrian government, Islamic awakening and its intention to host the Non-Aligned Movement summit in 2012 (Sajjadpour, 2012). The discursive context will also explain to us "how the nuclear issue has gained significance in Iran's foreign relations and how its priority has been justified within this meaning structure" (Moshirzadeh, 200: 526). The discursive context will also reveal Iran's attempts to extend its security perimeters to Palestinian and Lebanon's territories.

I- Discourse Analysis and Foreign Policy

The basic idea of discourse analysis centers around the notion that "all objects and actions are meaningful" (Howarth and Stavakakis 2000: .2). Based on discourse analysis, all social practices such as political phenomena are contextual and relational, depending on the social context they take place (Howarth and Stavakakis 2000: 4). Actually, discourse produces the categories of meaning and concepts by which social reality can be understood (George, 1994:29-30). Discourse creates a shared way in which people make sense of social reality within a given culture.

Discourse has different categories in various disciplines of social sciences. In the discipline of political science, discourse refers to the use of language pertaining to political issues. (Bilmes,1986; Fairclough, 1989; Kress and Hodge, 1979). In fact, politics is closely linked with the use of language, such as political talks, speeches, debates and proclamations (Yongtao , 2010:92). Discourse analysis of foreign policy mostly focuses on language and rhetoric used by policy makers. According to the discourse analysis, language constructs social context in which practices take place (Hansen, 2006; Larsen,1997). Language can be defined as "the set of shared understandings that produce the social world"(Howard, 2007:12). Discourse analysis is associated with Constructivist approach. Based on constructivist approach, language constitutes social reality. Constructivists believe that looking at how actors deploy language is



crucial for understanding and explaining their social behavior and understanding of the world. (Wendt, 1994). Karin Fierke, who has studied the role of language in identity constitution, believes that language is important in understanding how and why policy makers may give a hostile meaning to the military capabilities of others which leads to security competition between states (Fierke, 2001:118), Such as Iran- U.S. relations in which both countries give hostile meaning to each other's intentions, capabilities and foreign policy behaviors. Therefore, language can be used to shape the identity of the self and others, to constitute source of security and insecurity and to make "opportunities" and "threats" for states in the field of foreign policy (Yongtao, 2010:98).

Former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami's discourse of "dialogue among civilization" and his adoption of detente policy in order to develop the culture of peace and security on the one hand, and the George W. Bush's discourse of "axis of evil" and "rogue States" - which was introduced into the post 9/11 U.S. foreign policy discourse in order to extend the scope of "war on terror" on the other hand, are two competing discourses which show how proper and improper use of language can promote cooperation or competition among states. According to discourse analysis approach, discourse does not just explain reality, it rather constructs social reality. The policy-makers "work within a discursive space in which they impose certain meanings on the social world and then construct and reconstruct reality" (Wicaksana, 2009: 11). In fact, discourse analysis is dealing with the following questions: "How does a State develop its foreign and security policy through discourse? How does one understand the messages relayed by discourse that can affect the interaction between States? And, how does enmities, hostilities, and risks be made and constructed in world politics through discursive means?" (Yongtao , 2010:87). Hence, discourse analysis is not only related to comments and speeches, but it is concerning with behavior which takes place in social context. In reality, it does imply the



assumption that a discourse is behavior or what Nicholas Onuf argues, "saying is doing" (Onuf, 2001; Onuf 1989). On this basis, the separation of speech and behavior would be misleading in foreign policy. A discursive study of identity is related to constructivist approach which does not regard identity as stable and pre-existing concept, it rather assumes that identity is socially constructed by discursive process (Mumby and Clair,1997). In fact, discourse analysis is underpinned by constructivist approach which has important implications for the study of Iranian foreign policy.

To explain discursive construction of Iranian identity the paper applies holistic constructivist approach to the issue of discourse and the meanings produced by it in the social context of the country. Discourses construct social identity of states and social identity shapes the social behavior of states by defining their interests and positions in the international relations (Mumby and Clair,1997). As Wendt argues, national identity is a main source of national interest, guiding states foreign policy (Wendt 1992). Hence, Identity is an important element in constructing states foreign policy. Identity determines who is "Self" and who is "Others". In fact "the construction of identity is a process of differentiation, a description of one's own group and simultaneously a separation from the others" (Wodak ,1996: 126). Identity has two main functions: based on the first function, having a particular identity determines a certain set of priorities about the choices of behavior in different conditions. The identity is basis for states' foreign policy behavior towards other states. The second function of identity implies that a state perceives others based on its already held identity which reproduced during the social interactions (Tajfel, 1981:255). Constructivist scholars have conceptualized discursive construction of states' identity and provided powerful analytical tools for analyzing states identity and interests in international relations. (Wendt,1999; Kratochwil, 1989; Onuf,1989; Adler,1997; Gerard Ruggie,1998; Finnemore,1991; Finnemore, and Sikkink,1998).



Constructivists emphasize the constitutive effects of ideas and norms and explain how ideas and discourses influence states' perceptions and priorities in foreign policy. According to constructivist perspective, states attach meanings to the material objects and behave "on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them" (Wendt, 1992:397). In contrast with the rationalist approach that stresses on the logic of consequentialism, constructivist approach emphasizes the "the logic of appropriateness" as a basis for state behavior and interests. "The logic of appropriateness implies rule-guided behavior in which states try to "do the right thing" rather than maximizing or optimizing their given preferences. Constructivists stress on constitutive role of discourse and contend that "normative rationality implies constitutive effects of social norms and institutions, since these rules not only regulate behavior, that is, have causal effects, but they also define social identities" of states and legitimate interest (Risse, 2000: 4-5).

Hence, the basic contribution of constructivist literature is to challenge the question of state identity and interests. Constructivism doesn't treat state identity and interests as a pre-given and fixed variable; instead, it argues that the identity (self-perception) of a state is the major source of interest formation of that state. In this regard, Alexander Wendt, as a leading constructivist scholar, claims that "identities are the basis of interests" (Went, 1992: 398). In the constructivist theory, understanding of the process through which the actors' identities are constructed by non-material structures is very important, because the social identity of states is the main basis of interest-making in world politics. (Smit, 2001: .217). Based on constructivist approach, state' interest in international politics is determined by state identity which is depending on historical, cultural, political, and social backgrounds. Contrary to realists who argue that material structures like balance of military power have causal effect on states behavior, constructivists argue that "systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics and that they



exert a powerful influence on social and political action” (Smit, 2001: 217). From this perspective, ideas and discourse have structural features. They are understood as inter-subjective meanings¹ which are the propellant of social behavior. From this viewpoint, “what actors do in international relations, the interests they hold, and the structures within which they operate are defined by social norms and ideas, rather than by objective or material conditions” (Thaddeus J. 2004:338). They try to show how ideational structures determine the ways that actors redefine themselves. These ideational structures can be defined as "collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity" (Jepperson , Wendt and Katzenstein, 1996:54) which tell actors who they are, what their goal is and what role they should play. (Copeland, 2000:190) .

It is worth mentioning that constructivist approach doesn't reject the effect of material structure on states' foreign policy, it rather believes that material structures are context-oriented and “only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded” (Went, 1995: 73).² Therefore, material capabilities should be understood within the discursive and social structures. By unpacking state identity and interests, constructivists pose an appropriate explanation of why different states behave differently under the same systemic constraint.

Accordingly, this study examines that on the one hand, identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been constructed by its normative discourses at domestic level, and on the other hand, the previously held identity affected by social interaction at the international level (mostly by its relations with the western countries in general and with the United States in particular). This identity formation at both the domestic and systemic levels shapes Iranian foreign policy behavior. This process of identity formation can explain us change and stability of the Iranian foreign policy since the Islamic Revolution.

Articulation is one of the central concepts of discourse analysis by which a discourse can take a hegemonic position in a society.



Laclau and Mouffe argue that a discourse originates from articulation. They **define articulation as:** “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:105). Articulation of a political discourse centers round a nodal point. (Torfing, 1999: 98). Nodal point constructs the core of each discourse. Laclau and Mouffe define nodal points as follows: “any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a center. We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, nodal points.” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:112). In fact, other signifiers of a discourse are articulated around the nodal point. Nodal points, before articulation, were floating signifiers and placed in the field of discursivity.³ Hence, the meanings of nodal points are partially fixed by articulation in a given social field (Torfing, 1999).

“Anti-western revolutionary identity” is considered as the nodal point of Iran’s foreign policy discourse in relation to which signs and moment are organized in a chain of equivalence⁴ that gives meaning to the country’s foreign policy behavior. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iranian new identity constantly has been threatened by the western identity (as an outside threat). To neutralize the western threats, Iranian officials continuously have emphasized the anti-western revolutionary identity and created a chain of equivalence around the new constructed identity. As Phillips and Jorgensen argues “identity is discursively constituted through chains of equivalence where signs are sorted and linked together in chains in opposition to other chains which thus define how the subject is and how it is not” (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002: 43). Iran’s foreign policy discourse consists of several signifiers such as non-domination, independence, resistance, anti-arrogance campaign, nationalism, Islamic unity, and responsibility which all have been articulated around the nodal point of anti-western revolutionary identity. Before the Islamic revolution, in the status quo “pro-western discourse” of Iranian foreign policy, such



elements⁵ were floating signifiers which placed in the field of discursivity. But, in post-revolutionary era, these signifiers were highlighted by new articulation around the anti-western identity and took a hegemonic position in Iranian foreign policy. Generally, Islamic Republic of Iran constructs its anti-western identity through a chain of equivalence by which structured the mentioned signifiers within the anti-western discourse and linked them together in order to establish its identity rationally.

II- Construction of Iranian Identity: Discourses and Ideas

Iran's foreign policy has been constructed by some important discourses which articulated around the nodal point of anti-western revolutionary identity. These discourses give meaning to Iran's foreign policy behavior and distinguish it from the rest of the world. Generally, the following discourses are the main recourses for Iranian identity and have been directing the country's foreign policy behavior since the Islamic revolution.

“Responsibility” vs. “Consequentiality”: One of the main unique principles in Iranian foreign policy is responsibility toward the Muslim world. This transnational responsibility refers to the ideological objectives that Islamic Republic of Iran pursues out of its borders as an ideological 'duty'. This specification differentiates between secular states and ideological ones, though the term is more general than being limited to ideological states (Haghighat, 2007). The foreign policy behavior of Iran is not adopted solely in terms of its consequences as the logic of consequentiality in the rationalist theories implies. Based on the ideological logic, responsibilities and emancipatory missions construct the foreign policy behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hence, this country can be considered as a mission-oriented state rather than interest-oriented (Dehghani Firozabadi, 2008:7). In line with the logic of responsibility, the country “undertakes the fraternal commitment towards all Muslims, and unsparing support to the oppressed of the world. The practical



reflection of this principle in Iranian foreign policy is manifested in rejection of domination, defending the rights of all Muslims” (Dehghani Firozababadi, 2008:15). The Iranian anti Zionist policy and its support of Islamic resistance movements and Lebanese and the Palestinian people are interpreted within the logic of responsibility. Article 152 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (adopted on 24 October 1979) reads; “The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based upon... the defense of the rights of all Muslims, non-alignment with respect to the hegemonist superpowers, and the maintenance of mutually peaceful relations with all non-belligerent states”.⁶ In the Iranian Constitution, necessity of movement towards establishment of a united single world community to rescue deprived and oppressed nations throughout the world has been emphasized. To this end, more attention has been paid to relations between nations than to relations with states.

In fact, the ideological context gives meaning to Iranian foreign policy behavior toward the Muslim world. Some objectives of Iranian foreign policy are most difficult for some to understand, unless we interpret them within the ideological context. According to the founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini, “we have to support all oppressed people around the world...because Islam...is the supporter of all oppressed people” (Ayatollah Khomeini, 1982, vol.1:31). Also Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has emphasized that “we consider supporting the Palestinian and Lebanese people one of our major Islamic duties. This is why Washington is applying huge pressure against the Islamic Republic in order to stop this support” (Ayatollah Khamenei, April 24, 2001). Actually, after the Revolution, the country along with the new definition of “self”, tried to develop its new identity to the regional and extra regional states by the strategies such as: “export of revolution” and “support for Islamic revolutionary movements”.

Based on logic of ‘responsibility’, the Islamic Republic of Iran “enduring the costs and persistence against pressures which are not



justifiable based on the instrumental rationality and cost-benefit logic”, only could be described within the logic of ‘responsibility’ which is originating from the political Islam. The policy of ‘proximity among hearts’ is seen as the manifestation of the logic of responsibility. The policy approves “economic support for Muslims or even infidels by the prophet (PBUH), or Imam or faqih (Muslim jurisprudent), or Islamic government to encourage their participation for Jihad or encouraging them to convert to Islam and defend it” (Sariolghalam, 2002:69). Many verses of the Holy Quran and traditions underline the duty to be shouldered by all Muslims, individuals and Islamic governments.

Following are some examples of financial aid provided to foreign states or groups in line with the policy of ‘proximity among hearts’ : Aid totaling USD 250m for Hamas as compensation for the western boycott, and commitment to pay the salaries of 100,000 Palestinian Authority employees for six months (Fars News Agency, Dec11, 2006); approving delivery of one million tons of gratis crude oil to Syria by the Islamic consultative assembly, signing into law a bill to extend the deadline for North Korea’s USD 170m debt to Iran by the Iranian parliament as well as economic aid to Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine and other Islamic countries (Sariolghalam, 2002: 70). On this basis, what distinguishes Iranian foreign policy from other countries, is assuming “the ‘other-regarding’ interest as inseparable part of the ‘self-regarding’ interest. Such interests are pursued in line with the principle of responsibility. (Dehghani Firozabadi, 2008: 17).

“Anti-Arrogance Campaign”, “Counter-Hegemonism” and “Resistance”: The discourse of Resistance is inseparable part of Iranian identity. “Resistance” and “Counter-Hegemonism” and anti-arrogance campaign are based on the Islamic rule of “Nafy-e Sabil”⁷ or no domination over Muslims. Based on the religious principle, "Islam is so that it gains supremacy and isn't dominated by others". Hence, the Islamic government in its foreign affairs should behave in



such a way that it won't be dominated by other powers (Eftekhari, 2007:34). It could be argued that the most significant behavioral feature of Iran's foreign policy in the past three decades has been counter hegemonism or anti –imperialism which “has led to the formation of a particular role identity in Iran’s foreign policy: Iran as an independent state” (Moshirzadeh, 2007:529).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a counter-hegemonic state and attempts to challenge the monopolizing cores of oppressive powers in the international relations and looks for complete elimination of all kinds of colonialism and despotism and absolutism and imperialism. In fact, Iran's anti- western and anti-American policies can be understood in the context of these objectives and motivations (Dehghani Firozabadi, 2008: 12). To establish its counter hegemonic aspiration, Iran is seeking “purposeful cooperation, coalitions and alliances among anti-hegemonic forces at individual, state and non-governmental levels. To this end, Iran has extended its efforts to forge counter imperialism fronts in the third world, Islamic world and Asian continent” (Dehghani Firozabadi, 2008: 19).

The Islamic Republic of Iran in line with its “anti-hegemonic” and “resistance” discourses, pursues two major strategies-“Look East Policy” and “South–South Alliances”. Based on Look East Policy, Iran has built close relations with Eastern powers, especially China and Russia. It has also attempts to realize its long sought ambition of becoming a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Iranian officials believe that an anti-U.S. axis with nuclear powers such as China, India Russia and Pakistan could establish a pole of main powers in Asia, opposing American policies and deterring a US military attack on Iran. At the present, Iran is seeking to recruit allies for a coalition that would oppose U.S. interests in the Middle East and Central Asia.

On the one hand, based on South–South Alliances”, Iran tries to strengthen its relations with Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In line with the South–South Alliances, the 16th Summit of NAM



hosted by Iran in 26-31, August 2012. The NAM summit that comprised of 120 countries was the most important political event in post Islamic revolution. In fact, the summit “explains some dimension of the identity of Iran's foreign policy. Iran identifies itself with the global south, embodied in the NAM” (Sajjadpour,2012). For Iran's leaders, hosting the summit gives an opportunity for the state to counter and criticize the U.S. unilateral measures. In this regard, Iranian first vice president Mohammad Reza Rahimi said that during Iran's 3-year presidency of NAM, cooperation among those states with anti-arrogance tendencies will be strengthened (Rahimi, 2012/09/02). Iran also tries to gain more support from NAM members for its nuclear program. In this summit all Non-Aligned nations supported Iran's peaceful nuclear program and welcomed Iran's proposal which bans attack on nuclear installations. By pursuing the strategy of "South-South Alliances", Iranian officials also try to neutralize the West's threats of a military strike or economic sanctions against the country.

On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran attempts to develop the 'South-South alliances' to the Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and the countries that pursue an 'anti-imperialism' agenda. The opposition to imperialism, neo-liberalism, and globalization from the position of third world “victimism” is the main element of political affinity between Iran and these countries (Ratus and Furtig, 2009). President Ahmadinejad announced “an anti-hegemonic and anti-imperialistic front is currently forming, and all free nations and justice seeking people are little by little giving their hands together to create an expanded front against domineering system and thought” (Ahmadinejad, Aug 8, 2007). Regarding Iran's relationship with Venezuela, Ahmadinejad said that “Cooperation between Iran and Venezuela can be a model for anti-imperialist campaigns” (Ahmadinejad, Oct 06, 2008). Meanwhile former Venezuelan Energy Minister Rafael Ramirez said "campaign against imperialism brings the two countries closer and in



this way victory is with those not sitting idle" (chinadaily, 01/07/2009).

Iranian leaders constantly have called for countering hegemonism and confronting imperialism as essential principle of Iran's foreign behavior (Dehghani Firozabadi, 2008: 18). Iran's supreme leader- as a vital element in the country's decision making process- argued that "we'd never tolerate hegemonic behavior...and countering global hegemonic system and to overrule the oppressed-oppressors equation is an inseparable indicative of our diplomacy" (Ayatollah Khamenei, Aug 20,2007). From his viewpoint, the 1979 revolution was about eliminating foreign powers influence in Iran.

In the early days of the Islamic Revolution, the concepts of "Counter-Hegemonism", "Anti-Arrogance Campaign" had been crystallized in the policy of the "Neither East nor West, [only] an Islamic Republic" that considered as the Iranian version of "Non-Alignment". At that time, Iranian revolutionary officials had four essential policy goals in declaring non-alignment: "(1) to achieve autonomy in foreign policymaking, (2) to avoid a costly involvement in the American-Soviet rivalry, (3) to end Iran's dependence on one ideological camp, and (4) to improve ties with all states (except Israel and the former South African regime). Most of those goals were rooted in Iranian history, geopolitics, and economy. In fact, the status and condition of Iran under the Shah was the main factor in shaping such a post-revolutionary foreign policy" (Sadri, 1999:31).

R.K. Ramazani believes that "for Iran, the past is always present. A paradoxical combination of pride in Iranian culture and a sense of victimization have created a fierce sense of independence and a culture of resistance to dictation and domination by any foreign power among the Iranian people. Iranian foreign policy is rooted in these widely held sentiments" (Ramazani, 2009:12).

As appeared in the Iranian constitution as well as public declarations, the effective actions of ayatollah Khomeini, ayatollah Khamenei, Ahmadinejad and other influential personalities (including



Rafsanjani and Khatami), the ultimate aim of the Islamic revolution is the rejection of arrogant and hegemonic discourses and establishment of a new fair international system. Iranian officials believe that the UN is a political tool in hands of superpowers. On this basis, Iranian government tries to use NAM to make changes in the unjust international system.

Discourse of Expediency: Expediency (*Maslahat-e Nezam*) is one of the basic principles of the Iran's foreign policy which has been constantly pursued especially since the second decade of the Islamic Revolution. The principle is originating from the high capacity of Shia political Jurisprudence for managing foreign policy of the Islamic government. The principle of expediency seeks to combine accomplishment of the discourses of anti arrogance campaign, anti-hegemonism and resistance with the prudence and cautious ways in Iran's foreign policy. Actually, the "principle of expediency elevates the survival of the Islamic Republic to a supreme religious value" (Eisenstadt and Khalaj, 2011:ix). It means that when an incompatibility arises, political considerations (survival of the Islamic Republic) take precedence over religious consideration. In fact, the principle of expediency is placing Islamic rule under the vital interests of the Islamic government (Figg-Franzoi, 2011:12).

Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council, made the following comments about the concept of expediency and its relationship to Islam: "We can solve whatever foreign problem is threatening us from the viewpoint of Islam....Our ideology is flexible. We can choose our expediency on the basis of Islam. Still, to put the country in jeopardy on the grounds that we are acting on an Islamic basis is not at all Islamic" (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 2003). Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has always avoided entering seriously into international disputes and conflicts in order to preserve its survival and vital interests (Vaezi, 2009). With respect to this, there are various cases that show the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted a pragmatic and expediency-oriented approach to reduce risks and costs



in its foreign policy. For example, Imam Khomeini based on the principle of expediency and in response to reports from various agencies and figures regarding Iranian political and economic challenges during the Iran –Iraq war, decided to end the war based on the UN Resolution 598 (Yaphe, 2010:۴). According to the principle of expediency, Iran has sought to eschew involvement in various regional conflicts such as: the 1991 Shia uprising in Iraq, the 1998 capture of the city of Mazar-e-Sharif by the Afghan Taliban (which led to the murder of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist and the carnage of Shia Hazaras), the war between Israel and the Lebanese Hizballah in 2006, and the suppression of Shia protestors in Bahrain (Eisenstadt, 2011:۴) and the suppression of Muslims in western Xinjiang and Chechnya by the governments of China and Russia.

Likewise, due to the principle of expediency, Iran believed that its uranium enrichment may increase its economic and security risks, it decided to give up its national right to uranium enrichment in order to “build confidence” in Iran’s peaceful nuclear program in 2003. But, by early 2005, with the failure of the confidence-building measures, Iran realized that suspension is not a useful way for resolving its nuclear standoff with the west. Hence, the country decided to abandon the suspension of uranium enrichment in a step by step process (Yaphe, 2010:5). In conclusion, in the abovementioned conflicts Iran preferred to take a pragmatic and expediency-oriented foreign policy to avoid risky and costly foreign adventures.

“Self-Sufficiency” and “Independence”: Self-Sufficiency and Independence are the basic discourses of Iranian foreign policy which was pursued after the Islamic Revolution. The Islamic Republic of Iran is seeking to internalize more sophisticated technologies and knowledge as an efficient response to the international boycotts. After the Iranian Revolution, pursuing indigenous capabilities, technology and knowledge especially regarding nuclear fuel cycle has become a



matter of national pride. By doing so, Iran tries to eliminate its reliance on foreign powers. The development of indigenous technology to achieve self-reliance will reduce the dependence on foreign inputs, especially in critical and vulnerable areas and in high value-added items in which the domestic base is strong. Iran argues that it faces systematic discrimination in purchasing nuclear fuel. This discrimination is the result of both direct US interventions to cancel contracts and sanction companies that do business with Iran and indirect intimidation of foreign firms by the threat of such measures. In fact, the United States sanctions against Iran have strengthened Iran's argument that indigenous nuclear fuel production is necessary. Hence, in the 1990's Iran began pursuing an indigenous nuclear fuel cycle capability by developing a uranium mining infrastructure and experimenting with uranium conversion and enrichment.

Iranian independence seeking is based on three major resources: "Iran's glorious past; historical victimization by the invaders; and (semi)-colonial/imperial encounters" (Moshirzadeh, 2007: 529). Iran's supreme leader argues there is a causal relationship linking scientific advancement, self-sufficiency and independence. Ayatollah Khamenei contends that American and European sanctions against Iran are not only ineffective in changing Iranian foreign policy, but they are actually constructive because they force Iran to become more self-reliant. He hopes Iran will be "self-sufficient enough to be economically independent and economically independent to be politically independent" (Sadjadpour, 2008:11). The discourse of independence helps us to understand "the Iranian overemphasis on self-sufficiency and Iran's rejection of proposals that imply dependence on foreign sources in the nuclear field" (Moshirzadeh, 2007: 529). In this regard, Ayatollah Khamenei believes that the United States is not opposed to Iran's nuclear program for the sake of the proliferation threat, but rather because of the potential independence and economic leverage that Iran would derive from it (Sadjadpour, 2009:5).



Ayatollah Khamenei, Iranian Supreme Leader, accepts the costs of Iran's political choices, and believes the price for Iran's perceived independence is worth paying (Sadjadpour, 2008:11). In order to attain independence and achieve national sovereignty and honor, any nation will have to pay a certain price. But nations should incur such expenses and make every effort to achieve the above objectives. They should be hopeful of the valuable results of their endeavors, despite all the attempts that are being made by the enemies to undermine their hopes and aspirations (Ayatollah Khamenei, Feb2, 2006).

In conclusion, Iran's rejection of western proposals for its nuclear crisis especially regarding the supplying nuclear fuel (instead of producing it in Iran) can only be understood within the context of self sufficiency and independence.

“Persian Nationalism”: Patriotism is another factor we need to study to understand Iran's foreign policy. Various historical and cultural factors continue to shape Iranian perceptions and behaviors apart from the relative existence clerical government. Iranians see their historical and cultural achievements as a great source of pride. According to Gregory F. Giles “The culmination of these historical, cultural, religious, and geographic influences is considered to constitute Iran's ‘strategic personality’ or ‘culture’” (Giles, 2003:145). He believes that Iranian strategic culture is rooted in a nearly 3000-year history of Persian civilization. As R.K. Ramazani argues, Iranians “take pride in 30 centuries of arts and artifacts, in the continuity of their cultural identity over millennia, in having established the first world state more than 2,500 years ago, in having organized the first international society that respected the religions and cultures of the people under their rule, in having liberated the Jews from Babylonian captivity, and in having influenced Greek, Arab, Mongol, and Turkish civilizations” (Ramazani, 2009: 12).

The Islamic Republic of Iran has resorted to nationalism and used popular support as leverage against foreign powers. Iran believes that the popular support of the regime is a deterrence force against



military threats. As the Iranian Leader has repeatedly stated the governments that rely on public support cannot be threatened by enemy.⁸ Furthermore, since the days of the Shah, Iranian officials have argued that Iran's size, historical significance and self-professed cultural superiority, merit a basic role for the state in the region. Many of the Shah's policies were aimed at reviving the ancient Iranian Empire. Such a quest for influence and status has continued after the revolution to gain a meritorious role on the world stage. The Islamic Republic trumpeted Iranian nationalism to garner public support during its war with Iraq and is following the same path regarding its nuclear program. Dozens of patriotic songs have been composed regarding the country's nuclear program.

Iran's nuclear program has become the country's key national issue. Therefore, Iranian officials are using a discourse of nationalism and historical pride to form a collective idea about the nuclear program. Many Iranians who oppose the Islamic regime believe that Iran should continue its nuclear program despite disagreement and pressure from western powers. Accordingly Many Iranians contend that the United States is simply trying to punish Iran for its defiance of American policies. They believe that US pressure on Iran to give up its uranium enrichment "is a conspiracy by the western powers to deny or prevent Iran from acquiring advanced technology and keep Iran backward and dependent on the West" (Zibakalam, 2006).

“Islamic Unity” and “Islamic Solidarity”: The policy of “Islamic Unity” and “Islamic Solidarity” are so visible in Iranian foreign policy toward the Muslim world. Theses discourse began by the policy of “Islamic Umma” (including all Muslim communities) in the early days of the Iranian Revolution. On this basis, the Islamic Republic of Iran is trying to build unity among the Islamic states to help them play an important role for the establishment of a fair system in global politics. The concept of ‘Islamic solidarity’ principally refers to the expansion of economic and technical ties among Islamic countries. The economic and technical relations of Islamic countries



spill over to political and security areas and finally, cultural and Islamic contiguity further facilitate the interactions of Islamic countries, bringing about mechanisms for conflict settlement” (Gharayagh Zandi, 2007-08:74).

The founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, considered the unity of the Islamic countries as a practical necessity. From his viewpoint, “Our Islamic scheme to create a kind of unanimity of view among Muslims of the world, to unite the Islamic countries, to establish fraternity among different Muslims of the world, to make a pledge with all Islamic governments of the world” (Ayatollah Khomeini, 1982, vol.3 :83-88). Ayatollah Khamenei at a two-day conference over Gaza crisis in March 2009, said that “the key to the solution of many of the problems of the Muslim countries lies in the resoluteness and solidarity of this wonderful galaxy.” (Ayatollah Khamenei, Mar 04, 2009). The policy of export of revolution (the previous policy in the early years of the revolution) has been replaced by the policy of Islamic solidarity which is more consistent with political conditions of the contemporary era. The first target of this policy is these Islamic countries which are based on Islamic principles like Lebanon, Syria Algeria. The Islamic Republic of Iran was looking for further convergence and brotherly relations with such countries (Norouzi, 2004:208-09).

Discourse of Enemy: Perception of Threat: After the Islamic Revolution, discourse of enemy opened its way to the Iranian political language which mostly "is fueled by the history of intervention, manipulation, and exploitation of the country by foreign powers” (Byman, Chubin, Ehteshami and Green, 2001:9-10). The history shows that Iranian threat perceptions are not all unwarranted, but rooted in long-standing set of historical threat. Since the Islamic Revolution, such an image of enemy has played an effective role in constructing domestic and foreign policy priorities.

The perception of threat and discourse of enemy have theological and historical roots which stem from Iran’s deep historical sense



of insecurity. Such insecurity is originating from a series of oppression and domination suffered by Persia over the centuries, which have left Iranian people more suspicious of foreigners. Actually, these eras of foreign domination appear to have basically formed Iranian interpersonal and, by extrapolation behavior (Giles, 2003: 147). Religious and historical bases of enemy shaped the chronic enmity mentality of Iranian officials toward unjust powers. According to William Liddle - a leading Indonesian scholar- such mentality consists of three mindsets: a 'narrow' one that makes a binary opposition between "us" and "them"; a 'defensive' one that considers the outside world as the enemy; and a 'conspiratorial' one that views the outside world as a group efficiently organized to fight Islam and Muslims (Liddle, 1997).

In fact, by the discourse of enemy the Iranian policy-makers try to create a binary opposition between "us" and "others" within the society. It is difficult to find a speech of Iran's officials without emphasizing the role of enemy to destruct the Islamic Republic of Iran. Just in a speech in Kurdistan Province (in May 2009) Ayatollah Khamenei, the Iranian Supreme Leader, 16 times applied the term "enemy" (Ayatollah Khamenei, May 12, 2009). Iranian supreme leader on February 16, 2009 said that the scientific progress in the country and the enthusiastic presence of youths in different areas are among other indications of the failure of enemy in defeating the Islamic Republic. He warned that a cultural invasion by the enemy was among its efforts to spoil the Islamic System, adding that all individuals, including him, have duty to defend the Islamic and revolutionary values. He also attributed questioning the fairness of Iranian presidential election to enemies. And said "but unfortunately some unjust friends and those who are a part of the nation and expect people to pay attention to them are unthankful and speak against the nation and with repeating the lies of enemies" (Ayatollah Khamenei, Apr 30, 2009).

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iranian president, in a meeting with Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh called on the Islamic



countries across the world to build a united barrier against the 'enemy plots'.

"Unity and cooperation between Muslim states will thwart the enemy plot to sow discord between Muslims and spread hegemony over them" (Ahmadinejad, Feb 24, 2009).

Change in the Global Management System: The officials of The Islamic Republic of Iran believe that international system is an unjust and unfair system which should be replaced by a just and fair international order. Hence, since the Islamic Revolution, the country has been pursuing a revisionist policy based on justice and fair international relations and invites arrogant countries to behave fairly. The structure of the current international system is perceived to be unjust and repressive. From a revolutionary viewpoint, "until the realization of the 'sublime universe', the world remains structurally divided into two antagonist areas: the world of good and the world of evil – light and darkness. There is the Party of God (Hezbollah) on the one side and the Great Satan (Shaytân-e Bozorg) on the other side. Compromise between the two is impossible. The struggle is constant until the first eliminates the second (Mozafari, 2009: 10). The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in different periods of time has been critical of the international status quo. According to the Supreme Leader, the Islamic republic tries to follow "justice driven policies" which imply hostility towards the US and Israel, despite enormous economic and political costs (sanctions and isolation). He "prefers defeat to a victory that could be achieved through injustice or oppression" (Sadjadpour, 2008: 11).

The justice-seeking policy was pursued with more enthusiasm by the administration of President Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad in his closing speech for the 16th Summit of the NAM in Tehran (26-31, August 2012) said "All members underlined the necessity of fundamental transformation in the global management and interactions. All members underlined public participation in the management [of the world] based on justice and amity as the



foundation of sustainable peace.” He reaffirmed the determination of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to change the global management system based on the principles of justice and amity. President Ahmadinejad, in a letter to President Barack Obama on Nov. 4, 2008, advised him to make "fundamental change" in the U.S. foreign policy. He told President Obama the world expects him to end policies “based on warmongering, invasion, bullying, trickery, and the humiliation of other countries by the imposition of biased and unfair requirements, and a diplomatic approach that has bred hatred for America's leaders and undermined respect for its people.” He suggests Obama to keep his interventions within U.S. borders and calls on him to end “unjust actions of the past 60 years” (Ahmadinejad, Nov 06, 2008). Ahmadinejad in response to a question regarding Iran's relationship with Latin America said “we are determined to maximize relations with countries of that region and our cooperation is aimed at increasing peace and equal justice throughout the world” (Ahmadinejad, Sep 26, 2009).

The justice-based discourse “allows us to understand Iran's continuous reference to double standards in the international system and its demand for an international recognition of its right to nuclear technology” (Moshirzadeh, 2007: 538). Based on this discourse, Iran doesn't want to compromise its rights to have nuclear power and not accept the demand to suspend its uranium enrichment, which the US and other Western countries see as a cover to produce nuclear weapons. The country's officials believe that the West ignores Israeli nuclear arsenal, while putting pressure on Iran to prevent it from using technology for peaceful purposes. Ahmadinejad says “It is no longer possible to humiliate nations and impose double standards on the world community” (Ahmadinejad, Sep 23, 2009).

In fact, Iranian officials see proof of double standards in the U.S. approach to nuclear proliferation in the region especially when it comes to the nuclear technology of Pakistan, Israel and India (Barzegar, 2009:25). Iranians feel humiliated that a country like



Pakistan is permitted by the international community to become a nuclear power, but the "sledgehammer" approach is employed against Iran (Abedin, 2006).

“Martyrdom”: Martyrdom entitled to Muslims who have died in defense of their faith or waging war for Islam. The concept can only be understood in the context of Islamic Holy Struggle (jihad). According to the Holy Quran, a martyr has a guaranteed place in Paradise. Martyrdom-seekers and Jihadists are not afraid of death at all in a battle or front. The fear factor is a serious dilemma in mundane and materialistic societies in which the life is defined solely within the boundaries of the physical existence. They regard the happiness and well-being within the short span of life on earth (Mohammadi, 2008:10-11). This culture is completely opposite to cult of martyrdom. Interestingly, Zionist regime’s Prime Minister acknowledged the reality of the source of power (martyrdom and Fearlessness) in Hezbollah: “when they (Hezbollah young combatants) are not afraid of death, then what can we scare them of?!” (Mohammadi, 2008:11).

Shia culture introduces some concepts and drives Iranian behavior in ways that are not readily understood by the West. Actually, The Martyrdom shows Shia attitudes toward war which is less goal-oriented than western concepts. "As evidenced by Khomeini's conduct of the 8-year war with Iraq, struggle and adversity are to be endured as a sign of commitment to the true faith". In this context defeat is not necessarily equated with failure. This emphasis on continuing the struggle against oppression and injustice {as an Islamic duty} rather than on achieving 'victory' is seen as producing a high tolerance of pain in Iran. The cult of martyrdom inherent in Shi'ism, specifically, the honor accorded those who give their life to defend the faith, may give Iran certain practical military advantages (Giles, 2003: 147). The war between Iran and Iraq which was considered as “holy defense” revived the religious cult of martyrdom and the Islamic Republic of Iran benefited highly from



martyrdom-seekers during the 8-year war with Iraq.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, these discourses have been constituted and expressed and emphasized in numerous and often repetitive ways, either via various declarations issued by the late founder of the Islamic Republic – Ayatollah Khomeini – or in the speeches and declarations made by his successor, Ayatollah Khamenei, and other prominent figures in the Iranian government. In parallel with these personalities, the ideological discourse is emphasized almost daily by imams in the mosques and in Friday prayers, the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards as well as other Iranian authorities" (Mozafari, 2009: 2). Hence, Iran's foreign policy has been subject to the mentioned discourses as main resources for Iranian definition of its identity and interests. The mentioned discourses shape the identity and consequently interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In fact, Iran's identity and interests are constructed endogenously and stem from social domestic discourses. It doesn't mean that international environment does not affect the country's foreign policy behavior. Rather the history of Islamic Revolution shows that international normative environment could move Iranian foreign policy toward moderation or radicalization. In other words, at the first step, before starting interaction with international community, the Islamic Republic of Iran constructs its identity based on its corporate identity (domestic level) which determines who is 'friend' and who is 'enemy'. At the second step, this previously held identity can be radicalized and strengthened due to the confrontational normative environment (particularly because of the West's policy toward Iran).

Promotion of confrontational and aggressive reactions by the international community toward Iran especially during the George w. Bush, intensified the country's social discourse over uranium enrichment program and strengthened its anti-Jewish/anti-American stance which has been continued until today. The confrontational norms during Bush's presidency stimulated Iran to resume its



uranium enrichment program after two years of voluntary suspension by partially reopening its fully safeguarded facilities and ending a voluntary suspension. (CBS News, Jan 03, 2006). With the weakening of the liberal and democratic values expressed by the Bush administration (such as his 'Axis of Evil' Remark, attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, and threatening Iran by the possibility of an assault on Iran's nuclear facilities), Iran's foreign policy especially when Ahmadinejad came to power was transformed into even more radical than that supported by Ayatollah Khamenei since 1989.

It should be remembered that after 9/11 Iran did cooperate with military maneuvers of the United States in Afghanistan. But, the rhetoric of "axis of evil" damaged the chance for further cooperation and improvement of the bilateral relations between the two states and radicalized Iranian political discourse against the Americans. (Yongtao, 2010:104). This aggressive discourse and rhetoric motivated Iranian leaders to expand the country's military capabilities.

During this period, revolutionary viewpoint⁹ on denying the Holocaust as one of the major discursive battles between Iran and the West, sparked many negative reactions in the West and resulted in U.N. resolution against Iran on 26 January 2007.¹⁰

The United States' aggressive policy--which were seeking to cut off Iran from the world economic and trading system and supporting a regime change in this country and continued during the Barack Obama's presidency--just increased Iran's tendency toward radicalizing its previous position. Hence, the fluctuation of U.S. policy toward Iran matches the changing perceptions of Iranian policy toward the United States. Generally, whenever Iran faced a confrontational normative environment, the state responded more aggressively toward international community.

Here are some examples that show Tehran radically responded to the international aggressive environment and retaliated against the Western economic sanctions:

- The recent case is Iranian parliament decision to downgrade



the country's diplomatic relations with Britain on 26 Nov 2011. Iran's parliament voted unanimously to expel the British ambassador in Tehran and downgrade diplomatic relations from ambassadorial level to that of chargé d'affaires and reducing economic ties with the UK to a minimum. The move came two days after US and Britain imposed new financial sanctions against Iran and targeted Iranian financial sectors including the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), to limit the country's access to international funding for its nuclear program (Guardian, Nov 27, 2011).

- In February 2012, Iran stopped selling crude oil to Britain and France to pre-empt the EU ban on imports of its oil from Iran. The ban is in retaliation against new EU and US sanctions on Iranian oil exports and financial transactions in its banking sector" (About 18% of Iran's oil exports are consumed by the EU countries).

- On Nov 28, 2009, Iran's decided to built 10 industrial scale uranium enrichment facilities, a dramatic expansion of the program, in defiance of U.N. demands it halt all enrichment activities. The move comes two days after the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog, passed a resolution demanding that Iran stop construction on a previously secret nuclear facility at Qom (CNN, Nov 29, 2009). Iranian, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, said that until then Iran did not have any intention of building 10 new Uranium enrichment facilities (Examiner, Nov 30, 2009).

- Iran's decision to postpone nuclear talks with the western countries is another example about radicalization of the country's foreign policy in response to the West's aggressive policy toward Iran. Iran considered the action as a "punishment" for the imposition of fourth sanctions of the U.N. Security Council that are designed to stop Iran's uranium enrichment (Guardian, Jun 28, 2010). Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that "It's a punishment to teach them a lesson to know how to have a dialogue with nations." Tehran declared that it set conditions for negotiations and threatened "retaliation" if its ships



are inspected under the resolution 1929 adopted by the U.N. Security Council (Ahmadinejad, Jun 28, 2010).

In fact, the mentioned examples of Iranian behaviors show how international aggressive and confrontational norms can serve as an element that strengthens position of Iranian ruling parties. In contrast, the peaceful international environment can moderate radical position of the country (Lindeman, 2007). Therefore, the peaceful and non-aggressive international environment can give an opportunity for such states to redefine their former position and move toward rational policies in international relations.

Conclusion

In fact, the study has provided a discursive understanding of Iranian foreign policy and tried to show a causal link between the discourses and practices in the country's foreign policy. As mentioned, a set of new concepts which articulated around the nodal point of "anti-western revolutionary identity" have affected Iran's foreign policy behavior since the Islamic Revolution.

This paper tried to apply the theoretical framework of discourse analysis to explain change and stability in Iranian foreign policy behavior toward the western countries. During the course of the research this theory has proven to be very appropriate approach for explaining Iranian foreign policy behavior. In order to give a discursive explanation of Iranian foreign policy, the article also applied holistic constructivist approach to the issue of discourse and tried to discuss how Iranian identity is socially constructed and to what extent the country's actions in foreign policy is based on its identity.

The main finding of the study is that Iranian foreign policy is driven by identity, and the process of identity formation takes place in both "domestic" and "international" discursive context:

Firstly, at the domestic level, Iran before interacting with international community, makes its identity based on the certain set of



discourses which determine who is 'friend' and who is 'enemy'. The detailed analysis of these discourses illustrates set of meanings attached to identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran which is the basis for interests and behavior of the state in foreign policy. These discourses have defined new interests for Iranian foreign policy and shaped the country's foreign behavior since the Islamic Revolution.

Secondly, this previously held identity has been moderated or radicalized due to the non-aggressive or aggressive normative environment at the international level. In other word, Iran's foreign policy in response to the West's confrontational policy toward the country, has been radicalized, and in response to the West's non-confrontational policy has been moderated. In fact, aggressive and non- aggressive international environment could affect Iran's foreign policy and move it to redefine its former identity. It shows that interests and objectives of Iranian foreign policy are constructed by a discursive process of identity formation which takes place at the domestic and international normative context. Hence, it can be said that any change in Iran's foreign policy behavior is the consequence of change in such discursive context.

Notes

1. Intersubjective meanings considered as collective knowledge “that is shared by all who are competent to engage in or recognize the appropriate performance of a social practice or range of practices.” See Ira Cohen (1987). “Structuralism Theory and Social Practice.” in Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner , eds., *Social Theory Today*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. P. 287.
2. For example, The US relationships with Iran and British cannot be explained by just simple balance of military power. Only material structure cannot describe the fact that Britain is a close American ally and Iran is a sworn adversary. Also it is same for Indian and Iran’s relationship with the United States or EU countries, so that for them the Indian nuclear weapons are less threatening than Iran’s missiles.
3. “The field of discursivity is a reservoir for surplus of meaning produced by articulatory practice-that is, the meanings that each sign has, or has had, in other discourses, but which are excluded by the specific discourse in other to unity of meaning” (Jorgensen and Phillips,2002).
4. The logic of equivalence unifies different elements and constitutes a chain of **equivalential identities in a given social field**.
5. There is a basic difference between “moments” and “elements”. Elements have not been articulated and open to differential ascriptions of meaning.
But moments have a fixed meaning which articulated around a certain nodal point. Moments can be redefined by different articulations.
6. Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, available, <http://www.carsicm.ir/icmroot/public/Documents/PDF/constitutionlawofiran.pdf> (accessed 8 November 2009).
7. This argument is a famous verse from the Holy Quran, which is known as Nafy-e Sabil, (Verse Women: 141).
8. For more information see official site for the words of Iranian Supreme Leader, at: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/> (accessed 30/05/2011); also see <http://www2.irib.ir/worldservice/englishRADIO/IRAN/Supreme.htm> (accessed 30/06/2011).
9. Ahmadinejad said "Following World War II, they resorted to military aggression to make an entire nation homeless on the pretext of Jewish sufferings and the ambiguous and dubious question of Holocaust," Press TV., April 20, 2009



,<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=92046> (accessed 18/ 4 2010).

10. Against the Ahmadinejad's speech on holocaust, 27 January was called by the U.N. the Day of Commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust.
11. On January 23, the EU foreign ministers agreed to ban oil imports from Iran to pressure Tehran to suspend its uranium enrichment; see "Iran stops oil sales to British and French firms" (19/02/2012). Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/19/us-iran-oil-europe-idUSTRE81107W20120219> (accessed 27/Jul/2012).

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