

Emancipating Foreign Policy: Critical Theory and Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy

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Abstract: Noticeable research works have been conducted to theoretically explain and analyze foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran. Different theories, ranging from positivism to post-positivism, were applied as conceptual frameworks to explore Iran's foreign policy, but undoubtedly the (classic or structural) realism could be considered as the dominant paradigm that may best define the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy.

The present paper applies the Frankfurt school of critical theory as its conceptual framework to analyze and explain Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. The main argument of the paper is that critical theory and its core concept of "emancipation" -having more analytical capacity compared to other concepts such as "national interest" or "freedom of action"- is appropriate for analyzing the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy.

Introduction

There are quite a number of research endeavors analyzing Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy from various viewpoints and

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paradigms¹. Due to predominance and influence of rational theories in international relations, the realist paradigm have been the main defining theoretical discourse to and study the Iranian foreign policy. Nevertheless post-positivist theories have also been applied to analyze and explore the nature and behavior of Iran's foreign policy.² In spite of explanatory strength of both range of theories in analyzing part of processes and behaviors of Iran's foreign policy, they have still shortcomings in defining its entirety.

Although some critics of this conceptual framework have ruled out its assumptions, concepts and hypotheses as being non-operational and reject the critical theory as a research program, the present paper is about to apply the Frankfurt school of critical theory as its conceptual framework to analyze and explain the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy³. It would underscore the critical theory's capability and capacity as a conceptual framework to analyze Iran's foreign policy. In other words, it is possible to analyze objectives and aspects as well as Iranian foreign policy behaviors through applying the concepts and elements of critical theory. Thus, the main questions to be answered in this article are as following:

1- Is critical theory as a conceptual framework applicable for analyzing Iranian foreign policy? Does it have the capacity to define the motivations, objectives and foreign policy behavior of Iran? Answering the questions tentatively, the paper hypothesizes that motivations, objectives and Iran's foreign policy behaviors can be analyzed within the concept of "emancipation" as the core concept of this critical theory.

To examine the hypothesis, the present paper is organized in three parts and a conclusion. First, the requirements and specifications of an appropriate theoretical framework to analyze Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy will be explored. The rationality actor model and the logic of action in foreign policy within the framework of critical theory are discussed in the second part. The third part deals with exploration and analysis of motivations, objectives and behavioral patterns of Iranian foreign policy based on "emancipation" theoretical concept of the critical theory. In conclusion, the weak and

strength points of the critical theory in analyzing Iran's foreign policy will be summarized.

1- The Requirements of a Desirable Theoretical Framework

Finding an appropriate theoretical approach, capable of explaining the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy has not been an easy choice, since any theory is based on various propositions and assumptions which underscore distinctive variables or processes. Consequently, there is no consensus on a competent theoretical framework to analyze Iran's foreign policy. Such differences stem partly from the debates on applicability of international relations theories to analyze foreign policy, and disagreement among foreign policy analysts on the nature and identity of Islamic Republic of Iran's political system. There are divergent views on the possibility of applying international relations theories as conceptual frameworks to explain foreign policies, including Iran's foreign policy. Theoretically speaking, scholars like Kenneth Waltz differentiate between the foreign policy analysis and international politics and as they suppose, it is not possible to apply existing theories in one area to analyze another one. (Waltz, 1979) There are some others who find the two fields interrelated and complementary.

There is still a third argument that believes in no considerable distinction between international politics and foreign policy theories. They assume that there exists some extent of analytical interactions between the two fields; therefore extracting general principles and guidelines from international politics' paradigms to study and formulate foreign policy theories is possible. Furthermore, there are also close linkage between international relations and foreign policy theories in terms of values, norms and prescription and it could provide policy makers with recommendations and prescriptions in devising the foreign policy⁴.

Nevertheless, the successful application of international politics' theories in foreign policy studies would not entail applying them to analyze Iran's foreign policy without adjustment and modification. That's because some other limitations and

considerations rising from the Islamic, revolutionary and developing identity and nature of Islamic Republic of Iran withhold such international relations theories to fully explain Iranian foreign policy.

The foremost theoretical limitation originates from context and nature of international relations theories, since they are mainly shaped and formulated based on western values and considerations to maintain the international status quo or restore their desired world order⁵. Meanwhile, the predomination of realism over international relations studies in post- World War II, has confined this discipline to the relations and interests of great powers. This has mainly led to the marginalization of developing countries and exclusion of their foreign policy and relations from the explanatory scope of such theories. Therefore, the mainstream theories of international relations lack the capacity to appropriately analyze and understand the foreign policy behaviors of such states whose history, culture, and values are distinct from Western world.⁶

In addition to the explanatory deficiency of international relations theories in defining the developing countries' foreign policy, there also persists the problem of analyzing the foreign policy of revolutionary states. Revolutions are unique socio-political phenomenon that conduce specific foreign policy behaviors. Revolutionary states inspired by revolution and the revolutionary political systems, adopt foreign policies that are distinguished among state-actors⁷. Hence, the existing mainstream international relations theories could even define the developing countries' foreign policy behavior. They are still unable to explore the policies of revolutionary states, particularly because rational theories such as neo-realism disregard the effects of internal variables -such as revolutions- on states' foreign policies.

In addition to its revolutionary attribute, the Islamic characteristic also differentiates the Iranian political system from other revolutionary systems. Therefore this specific legitimizing ideology is yet another constraining factor which limits the choice of an appropriate conceptual framework to analyze Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy.⁸ At the same time, the paradigms on foreign policy of revolutionary states make no distinction among revolutions

and revolutionary systems and assimilate them in their foreign policy behavior. Consequently, the foreign policy of revolutionary states such as Russia, China, Cuba, and Iran (irrespective of its Islamic quality) are presumed identical in their nature and are deterministic in function.

In spite of existing theoretical and conceptual restrictions, Islamic Republic of Iran should not be considered a unique political state-actor whose foreign policy is impossible to be explained. For this purpose, the paradigms have to apply three levels of analysis as of third world, revolutionary and Islamic identity and nature of Iran and their effects on shaping of its foreign policy in their variables. The positivist international relations' mainstream theories, particularly realism either classic or structural, none are appropriate for this purpose. First, because their main focus is on the positions and foreign policies of the great powers, and underestimate the developing countries; and secondly, they mainly ignore the independent and effective role of the non-materialistic structures and capabilities in the formation of foreign policy. Therefore, when it comes to Iran, they disregard the national identity, revolutionary character, Islamic and ideological nature of the dominant discourse as determining factors in Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy; Third, Iran's national interest and preferences are regarded as a priori, self-evident, and externally-oriented and being pursued in a strategic context. Fourth, they regard Islamic Republic of Iran as an isolated case acting based on rational choice. Therefore, communicative and critical rationality behavior in Iranian foreign policy are being ignored; and last but not the least, they regard Islamic Republic of Iran as interest-based as identical to other political entities which solely pursue selfish, materialistic interests.

Consequently, as Ramazani noted earlier (Ramazani, 2001:30-36), conceptualization of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy beyond the mainstream theories continues to be an imperative⁹ and perhaps application of post-positivist theories as conceptual frameworks to analyze Iranian foreign policy could serve to this purpose. Although these theoretical approaches may also lack the necessary requirements to fully analyze the motivations, objectives

and behaviors of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, compared to other positivist theories, they are better equipped to take note of these elements raised by three factors of developing, revolutionary and Islamic, attributed to the nature and identity of Islamic Republic of Iran.

2- Critical Theory and Foreign Policy

Since the motivations, objectives and foreign policy behaviors of states including Islamic Republic of Iran are defined differently than the way rational choice theories contemplate, critical theory in Frankfurt school is among post-positivist theoretical approaches which could be applied to conceptualize Iran's foreign policy, should some adjustments be made to its principles and presumptions. It is sort of a meta-theory among paradigms of international relations and like other interpretive theories. Both in its actor-model and logic of action, it differs from mainstream paradigms in their rational choice approach of foreign policy.¹⁰

1.2-Social Actor and Logic of Responsibility

The critical theory is based on "*homo-sociologicus*" concept and unlike the rational choice theories of foreign policy in which the "*homo-economicus*"¹¹ is the basis for analysis, the actor here is not a self-interest, selfish, maximalist, profiteer and objective-oriented micro-actor, but he is an inherent social and context-oriented actor. Social grounds and inter-subjective structures play a pivotal role in formation of nature, identity, interest and behaviors of such an actor. Furthermore, such an actor is not behaving solely on instrumental rationality but the moral-communicative as well as critical-transcendental rationality are also significant elements in his attitude.

Therefore the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a social actor, enjoys nature, identity, interest and rationality, different from those of rational choice approach. Like other states, Islamic Republic of Iran is a historical phenomenon shaped by inter-subjective social structures like the norms, values, ideas, images, language, discourse and

common meanings. As a matter of fact, Islamic Republic of Iran's interests are endogenous and stem from social communications and transactions. Then, as the rational choice approach assumes, Islamic Republic of Iran is not output of self-interest and a priori objectives and motivations and not looking for implementing them in terms of low cost options and instruments. Nor it acts solely on instrumental rationality, but the moral-communicative and critical-transcendental rationality more define its foreign policy actions, motivations and behaviors. Communicative or moral-operational rationality are the outcome of inter-subjective social communication and interactions. In communicative rationality framework, the convincing mechanism and consensual actions are prior and preferred over controlling and domination on individuals and instruments. Critical or transcendental rationality is not inclined to exert possession over nature or making compromise, but it is rather as a critic of the status quo and towards a desirable order and a condition in which the social actors, including Islamic Republic of Iran, could contemplate on the ways to achieve self-awareness, self-understanding, perfection, prosperity, desired moral conditions and emancipation.¹²

Therefore, despite the "logic of consequentiality" in rationalist theory, the cause and motivations for behavior of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, its consistency and adaptation to the principles of co-existence, understanding and communicative-moral norms, emancipation, legitimacy and acceptability, all derived from its social and humane aspirations either in domestic or external environment. The most important components and elements of this social ground are non-materialistic structures such as ideology, culture, language, discourse, norms and values. To sum up, within the framework of critical theory, the logic of Islamic Republic of Iran's actions and behaviors could be inferred as "logic of responsibility".

According to the logic of responsibility, unlike the logic of consequentiality, the actions and behaviors of Iran are not adopted exclusively in terms of their consequences and achievements. On the contrary, responsibilities, duties and emancipatory missions shape actions and measures taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hence, Islamic Republic of Iran as a mission-oriented, and not interest-

purposive actor, speculates as an imperative on how to fulfill its missions and tasks rather than materializing its (a priori) objectives and interests. Decision making in Iranian foreign policy is also based upon the legitimacy, acceptability and priority of objectives followed in order to materialize missions and duties such as justice, prosperity, excellence, understanding and ultimately emancipation¹³.

Accordingly, Islamic Republic of Iran in its foreign policy and decision-making process faces some behavioral questions on the human and global conditions and its own discursive and communicative position as well as. It also tries to verify the compatibility of its tasks, duties, and missions with the existing conditions and the extent of expectations (domestically or externally) towards fulfillment of those missions and responsibilities. To see how much its behavioral options are justifiably accepted and are consistent with those missions and duties and compatible with Islamic criteria, moral and ethical norms and the principles of co-existence and understanding. It also strives to find out about effectuality of its behaviors in terms of changing the status quo and existing order, and establish the ideal Islamic order, and could serve to remove the hegemonic structures, repression, injustice, and ultimately achievement of emancipation. Finally, it comes the question on what should be the most appropriate, accepted and legitimate action and behavior of Iranian foreign policy based on circumstances and according to the moral, humane and Islamic norms and expectations.

2-2- Foreign Policy as Emancipation

Foreign policy in critical theory is defined and analyzed different than other conceptual frameworks. In critical theory, foreign policy is defined as emancipation while Neo-realism tends to describe foreign policy as an attempt to achieve security and influence. Putting it another way, foreign policy is an endeavor towards emancipation from hegemonic and repressive structures in the world system to secure and materialize aspirations and foreign objectives.¹⁴ So, the concept of emancipation would be regarded as the key concept to analyze Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. Within the critical

theory as a conceptual framework, emancipation represents the master signifier upon which all other dimensions get their meaning and configuration. While Habermas believes that emancipation is the rational independence of action (Quoted from: Brown, 1992:202), it is defined by Andrew Linklater as powers of self-determination and the ability of initiate actions. (Linklater, 1990: 135) In the same context, Ken Booth defines emancipation as a guarantee for the liberation of both individuals and nations from the restrictions and limitations that confine and, at times, prevent their freedom of choice and actions. (Booth, 1991:159) Meanwhile, Richard Ashley describes emancipation as freedom from unjustified restrictions, hegemonic and repressive rules as well as distorted communicative conditions and understanding that ignores the abilities and capacities of individuals and nations to make their own future through free will and knowledge. (Ashley, 1981: 227) Consequently, critical theory defines emancipation as autonomy, freedom of action, security and freedom of individuals and nations from domineering and repressive structures and elimination of restrictive social grounds and contexts which are conducive to injustice, and redefinition and reconfiguration of justice and equality in the international system.

Emancipation could be realized through inter-subjective understanding, discursive ethics, critical contemplation and resistance against hegemonic forces. Critical contemplation also requires the exploration and critique of human subjective assumptions and restrictive social structures to discover and recover diversions, ambiguities and chicaneries formed throughout human history and international system. These are structures and relations that have shaped social and human restrictions and are institutionalized and pretended to be natural and truthful due to the promotion of hegemony and domination. Emancipation, therefore, requires political, social and ethical reformation in both domestic and international society as well; an objective would not be materialized within instrumental rational choice approach, but feasible through moral-communicative and critical- transcendental rationality, simply because these hegemonic and repression structures are the outcomes of application of distorted wisdom in the world.¹⁵

The nation-state system and its underlying foundation .i.e. national sovereignty, and international system and the order derived from it are among the hegemonic and repressive political structures which have to be rethought, revised, redefined and reconstructed. Rethinking on the nation-state system, and the international order stemmed from it have to be conducted under three stages. First, the formation and evolution of state as a socio-historic phenomenon have to be analyzed. Then, the possibility for change and development in the current state system, as the unique ethical-political formation and legitimate source for loyalty, and the formation of other forms of such entities at the international system level would be scrutinized. Finally, the possibility and requirement for change and development in the international system's status quo and order resulted from the nation-state system is being taken precisely into consideration. The ultimate aim is to clarify the fact that none of these structures are self-evident and ordinary, thus their transformation is certainly required.

In sum, the emancipating foreign policy is distinguished from the power-centered realism and interest-centered liberalism. First, because emancipating foreign policy -beyond nation-states' confinement - is seeking to create a moral-political society comprising the entire humanity and surpass mainstream paradigms far beyond the power considerations, interest and control. Thus and based upon "ethics of responsibility", in addition to secure the interest and prosperity of its own citizens, emancipation foreign policy finds itself responsible for the prosperity and interest of entire humanity¹⁶. Second, quest for an international system and order free of hegemony, repression, discrimination and injustice not only needs consensus based on discursive ethics, but requires an emancipatory foreign policy, as one of its most important elements and objectives, to seriously oppose the existing hegemonic system and order. Third, counter hegemonism in emancipating foreign policy also requires endeavor to forge coalition and alliance of peripheral counter hegemonic forces of the international system¹⁷. Fourth, emancipating foreign policy is the outcome of factors which underlie the identity and different images of power like hard, structural, institutional and discursive-communicative power¹⁸.

3- Applying Emancipation Concept to Analyze Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy

1.3- The Advantages of Emancipation Concept

Conceptual ambiguities and analytical shortcomings in definition of national interest have led some scholars to think of other concepts to define and analyze Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. Rohollah Ramazani is among those pundits who applies the "freedom of action" instead of national interest, since, as he assumes, this term has got more analytical essence and capacity to define and analyze the foreign policy of modernizing and developing countries and describes it as "optimization of action in international system". (Ramazani, 2001:38) He argues that freedom of action is a concept more consistent with the political, economic, social, cultural, historical context, as well as domestic and external motivations of the developing countries, including Iran. This concept is more preferable as it overcomes the terms "independence" or "nationalism" in properly explaining the foreign policy of these countries after they secured their political and legal independence. Moreover, by linking the national and foreign policies, it defines and analyzes the most important motivation of these countries, as to grasp or reinsure their self-respect. (Ramazani, 2001:38-41)

Although freedom of action enjoys more defining and analytical efficiency compared to the concepts of national interest, independence and nationalism, yet it does not cover all dimensions, objectives, motivations and foreign policy behaviors of Islamic Republic of Iran. First, the term freedom of action downplays the Islamic Republic of Iran to just one of its identity dimensions, as being developing or modernizing. That would underestimate other dimensions of Islamic Republic of Iran's national identity particularly its revolutionary or Shiite aspects. As it was being discussed earlier, these two dimensions in identity of Islamic Republic of Iran are more determining and more evident in its foreign policy.

Second, the foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran is not an exclusive quest for freedom of action or reinstate and promote its self-respect or self-confidence; furthermore, it is seeking to emancipate other repressed developing, and even developed nations and countries from global hegemonic and repressive structures. As a matter of fact, Islamic Republic of Iran in its foreign policy tries to secure the prosperity, perfection and right of entire humanity. Therefore, its foreign policy is also trying to fulfill other functions as revolutionary, emancipating, exemplary state and supportive of liberation movements.

Third, although a foreign policy, based on freedom of action, requires some ranges of self-actualization, it does not necessarily improvise any change to the status quo system and revision in existing world order. Whilst striving to change the global hegemonic status quo system and order, and instating an efficient system and order based upon the Islamic justice and equality continues to be a high priority and important characteristic of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. In the same vein, in terms of foreign policy agenda, Islamic Republic of Iran could be called a revisionist state.

Fourth, in addition to revisionism, Islamic Republic of Iran in its foreign policy is strongly counter hegemonic and endeavors to challenge the monopolizing cores of oppressive power in the international system and looks for complete elimination of all forms of colonialism and despotism and autocracy. In the context of these objective and motivation, Islamic Republic of Iran pursues such functions as anti-imperialism, anti-despotism, anti-Zionism.¹⁹

Therefore, as it has already been explained, the concept of emancipation enjoys more defining and analytical efficiency than the "freedom of action" and in addition to having the same analytical specifications and capabilities of the freedom of action, emancipation alleviates the four analytical failures elaborated above. The analytical advantages of emancipation for the analysis of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy could be summarized as follows:

- 1- It includes the three dimensions of Islamic Republic of Iran's identity, that are developing, revolutionary and Islamic;

2- It addresses the cognitive, social, political, economic and cultural frameworks in the context of Islamic Republic of Iran;

3- It regards both material and non-material social structures such as values, norms, discourses and language as the determining factors of foreign policy;

4- The concept of emancipation links the domestic political parameters and considerations e.g. freedom from internal tyranny to foreign policy objectives like confronting the colonialism and global imperialism as two sides of the same coin;

5- It takes into consideration the foreign policy motivations of Islamic Republic of Iran such as reinstatement and promotion of its self-esteem, and ensuring the prosperity and well-being of Iranian nation, Islamic world and entire humanity;

6- It brings about the possibility for defining and analysis of the transnational objectives and principles of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy such as revisionism, anti-imperialism, counter-hegemony, supporting Muslims and the oppressed , forging coalition and alliance with Islamic and the third world;

7- Emancipation provides a framework within which different strategies and directions such as non-alignment movement, coalition and alliance with Islamic and third world, opposing the oppressive sources of power in the international system, and impartiality in foreign policy could be defined and analyzed;

8- The analysis of both continuity and change in Iranian foreign policy in different periods of time, i.e. the idealistic policies of the 1980s, the development-based policies of post-war reconstruction era, the pacifist policies based on Dialogue among Civilizations in reformists' period, and justice-centered policies of current principalist administration, all could be explained in terms of emancipation;

9- Enduring the costs and persistence against pressures which are not justifiable based on instrumental rationality and cost-benefit logic, could be described within emancipation conceptual framework and critical rationality; and Finally

10- It paves the way to analyze and define the outcome of multidimensional and multilevel variables of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy at individual, national and international levels.

Because emancipation may stem from individual, national or transnational motivations.

2.3- Behavioral Principles of Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy

The behavioral principles and patterns of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, including humanistic responsibility, universality and globalism, interests of humanity, challenging the hegemonic inclination and anti-hegemonic coalition all could be analyzed based on the principles and elements of emancipation concept.²⁰

From the other hand, the visionary principles and behavioral patterns of the Islamic Republic of Iran in its foreign policy in the last 30 years could be summarized in the five categories as: transnational responsibilities, prophetic-oriented, trans-nationalism²¹, Islamic and humanity interests, counter hegemonic, and forging coalition with anti-domineering forces. An initial glance at these two sets of principles suggests high degree of consistency and compatibility between them that justify the efficiency of emancipation concept in analysis of Iranian foreign policy. However, the theoretical grounds basis and cognitive source of these two sets of principle are not necessarily identical despite the fact that they may signify similar behaviors or implications.

A) Human Responsibility/ Prophetic-Orientation

One of the most important principles and elements the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is prophetic-orientation that was continuously pursued since the Islamist meta-discourse prevailed in 1981. All other Islamic micro-discourses including Ummah-centered idealism, expedience-oriented centrists, development-oriented realism, pacifist democrats or justice-oriented principalists all believed strongly in transnational responsibilities and duties of Islamic Republic of Iran in its foreign policy. Just scopes, limits and priorities of those tasks and responsibilities in foreign policy were debated among them. Despite the fact that Islamic Republic of Iran -under the leadership of an Islamic jurisprudent (i.e. *velayat-e- faqih*) was

established within the territorial entity and geographical border of Iran, it undertakes the fraternal commitment towards all Muslims, and unsparing support to the oppressed of the world.²²

The practical reflection of this principle in Iranian foreign policy is manifested in rejection of domination, defending the rights of all Muslims and their rights, and supporting the liberation movements. Although the implications, methods of implementation and advancement of these objectives in Iranian foreign policy have been transformed, they have been constantly pursued. These foreign policy patterns and behaviors stem from the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran that asserts: "The Islamic Republic of Iran ...supports the just struggles of the freedom fighters against the oppressors in every corner of the world", since the Islamic Revolution of Iran per se was "a movement aiming to the overcome of oppressed against oppressors". (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 154.) Therefore, framing the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran should have been based on seamless support for the oppressed all over the world. (The constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 3, Para 16.) The founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini, asserted to the same effect as: "we have to support all oppressed people around the world...because Islam...is supporter of all oppressed people". (Sahifeye Noor, Vol 12: 19-24.) Furthermore, constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran ordains the Iranian foreign policy, as an Islamic nation, to be adopted and implemented based upon "fraternal commitment to all Muslims", (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 3.) and "defend the rights of all Muslims of the world". (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 152.) The late Imam Khomeini stated that: "...this is an Islamic principle that every Muslim individual has to help other Muslims". (Sahifeye Noor, Vol 3: 31.) As such, "Iran exerts its power to support other Muslims". (Sahifeye Noor, Vol. 15: 266.)

B) Trans-Nationalism/ Islamic Globalism

The second behavioral principle of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is trans-nationalism or globalism. Since the Islamic

international relations theory does not maintain the nation-state as the only legitimate source of humane and Islamic loyalty, instead authenticates the ideological and ideational dividers and borders. Such a distribution system divides world into Islamic and non-Islamic domains. This borderline would vanish by the emersion of the twelfth Shiite Imam- Mahdi, Wali al-'Asr (may God hasten his reappearance) - and the entire the world and humanity would come under his leadership and Islamic sovereignty. Therefore the nation-state boundaries and national sovereignty as its underlying principle are surmountable and taking them off is even an imminent imperative.

This foreign policy doctrine of Islamic Republic of Iran has been reflected and expressed in three ways. The first manifestation is the Islamic Ummah which instead of nation, give credence to Ummah (Islamic community of Muslims) and replace national loyalty with Islamic and ideational allegiance. Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, therefore, is supposed to attempt for the formation of an Islamic Ummah under the Islamic unified sovereignty. Because in accordance with the sacred verse of the Qur'an in which the almighty says: "This your community is a single community, and I am your Lord, so worship Me", all Muslims form a single nation, and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the duty of formulating its general policies towards cultivating the friendship and unity of all Muslim peoples in order to bring about the political, economic, and cultural unity of the Islamic world". (The constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 11.)

In its second behavioral pattern in this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran spare no effort to change the international order and status quo system-which is based upon the nation-state political system- and restore a just and ideal Islamic order and international system. Accordingly, various foreign policy discourses of Islamic Republic of Iran in different periods of time all were critical to the status quo system and international order and endeavored to amend and change it. Such corrections and changes would be the starting point for emergence of a global political community beyond the scope of nation-states.

The third and a long term objective of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, in the context of Islamic globalism, is the creation of a global Islamic community, due to the globality of Islamic mission and universality of Islam and Islamic Revolution and accessibility of Islam to entire humanity. Therefore, the preamble of Iranian constitution dealing with general principles and the nature of the Islamic Revolution asserts that "...due to the nature of Islamic revolution which has been a supporting movement to all the oppressed people fighting against oppressors, will provide the ground for the continuance of Revolution within and out of country. This is particular in expanding the international relations with other Islamic and popular movements to form a global Islamic Ummah". The founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, also stated that: "...nothing should bring about aberration from the superb objective of revolution which is global Islamic government". (Sahifeye Noor, Vol 21: 108)

C) Interests of Humanity / Islamic Expedience

The principle of Islamic trans-nationalism which means working to unite the human community under one Islamic government requires the advancement of interests and expedients beyond national imperatives. Hence in foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran the humanity's interest and Islamic expedience are pursued parallel with national interest in such a way that the ensuring of human interests and Islamic expedients requires the achievement of Islamic Republic of Iran's national interest. That's because the survival and stability of Islamic Republic of Iran, and its vital interests play significant role in the materialization of human interests and Islamic expedients.

Thus, what distinguishes Iranian foreign policy, as an emancipating foreign policy is consideration of the "other-regarding" interest as inseparable part of "self-regarding" interest. Such interests and expedients are defined and pursued within the framework of ideological interests inclined to the global order²³. This foreign policy assumes that Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible to realize and

secure what humanity enjoys as common interest and expedience. All in all, these interests and expedients are defined and pursued in a logical sequence at three levels of national, Islamic and global.

According to the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran the ultimate goal and mission of this political system is to contribute to the prosperity and welfare of all human beings; "The Islamic Republic of Iran aspires for the human felicity and considers the attainment of independence, freedom, and rule of justice and truth as the right of all people around the world. Accordingly, while scrupulously refraining from all forms of interference in the internal affairs of other nations, it supports the just struggles of the freedom fighters against the oppressors in every corner of the globe". (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 154.) This proposition has been the guideline of foreign policy in the past 30 years, a behavioral pattern particularly attended by the ninth (current) administration, in such a way that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad highlighted that: "the elevation of human community and respect for human dignity along with a purposeful view to the world as well as justice and friendly treatment are among the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy". (Statement by President Ahmadinejad, 2007: 1-2)

D) Counter Hegemonism

The essence of the "emancipation" concept in the foreign policy is the abolition of all hegemonic and repressive structures in the international relations and the actual manifestation of this principle is struggle against the hegemonic structures and agents. From the other hand, it could be claimed that the most significant behavioral trait of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy in the past three decades has been counter hegemonism and anti-imperialism. In furtherance of the same substance the constitution emphasizes on: "the negation of either imposition or submission to all forms of tyranny and domineering" (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 2.) and therefore, the Iranian foreign policy is configured based upon the same essence, especially rejection of

domination and preservation of country's independence and its territorial integrity, and nonalignment towards the hegemonic superpowers". (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, Article 152.)

As such, the leaders of Islamic Republic of Iran constantly called for countering hegemonism and confronting imperialism as fundamental principle of their foreign policy. For instance, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, stated that: "we've repeatedly proclaimed this fact and truth in our Islamic foreign and international policy that we've been seeking and will seek to expand Islam in the world and remove the domination of hegemonic powers". (Sahifeye Noor, Vol 25: 224.) The Announcement by the supreme leader of Islamic Republic of Iran of this principle as the most significant feature of Iranian foreign policy reinstates its importance: "we'd never tolerate hegemonic behavior...and countering global hegemonic system and the to overrule the oppressed-oppressors equation is an inseparable indicative of our diplomacy". (Statement by Ayatollah Khomeini, 2007:1) And accordingly, "struggling against unipolar system and the imperial hegemonic system", "challenging the neo-colonialism and tackling the global domination" ²⁴, and "opposition to the power monopoly at global level" (Statement by Iranian Foreign Minister, 2006) are foreign policy objectives and priorities pursued by the ninth (current) administration.

E) Counter Hegemonic Coalition/ Anti Domination Alliance

Although the domineering inclinations associates anti-hegemonic forces within itself, the practical realization of counter hegemonic aspiration requires purposeful cooperation, coalitions and alliances among anti-hegemonic forces at individual, state and non-governmental levels. To this end, Iranian foreign policy has extended its efforts to forge counter imperialism fronts in third world, Islamic world and Asian continent.

Advancement of such an aim in the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is based upon inspirational and Islamic trans-

nationalism assigned to Islamic Republic of Iran by its constitution. Coalition and alliance of anti-hegemonic forces is an evident reflection of external balancing in Iranian foreign policy. As Imam Khomeini asserts: "our cause is the unification of Muslims and Islamic states against colonial powers" (Sahifeye Noor, Vol 1: 85-83), and he underlined the alliance and then uprising of oppressed as a guidelines to fight those powers: "it is hoped that a worldwide popular revolution would be staged against inhumane imperialist forces". (Sahifeye Noor, Vol 14: 113-115)

This behavioral principle and cause has always been pursued by Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, but as a particular priority in the discourse of the ninth (current) administration²⁵ mainly because it is assumed that: "an anti-hegemonic and anti-imperialistic front is currently forming, and all free nations and justice seeking peoples are little by little giving their hands together to create an expanded front against domineering system and thought"²⁶. Therefore, the diversification of Iran's international relations implies the rational opposition to global hegemony, unilateralism, and the preservation of Islamic Republic of Iran's national interest and security through establishing worldwide coalition and alliance.²⁷

Conclusion

One of the analytical challenges facing the study of Iranian foreign policy is finding a theoretical framework capable of analyzing its behaviors and substantial dimensions. Some believe that Islamic Republic of Iran is a unique political system whose foreign policy could not be analyzed within the framework of conventional and existing foreign policy and international relations theories. But the author of the present paper argues that the analysis and explanation of Iranian foreign policy is possible in terms of a modified version of current theories on foreign policy and international relations. Nevertheless, analysis of Iranian foreign policy in its entirety needs more than a single paradigm or a particular theory.

Hence, some theoretical concepts are efficient in analysis of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. In its query on Iranian

foreign policy, this paper tried to apply the concept of “emancipation”-as the master signifier in the Frankfurt School of critical theory. It was demonstrated that compared to positivist mainstream conceptual frameworks, critical theory and “emancipation “concept have got more analytical strength and could explain Iran’s foreign policy, especially aspects of its behavioral patterns such as trans-nationalism, anti-hegemonism, as well as third world, and anti-domineering inclinations.

In sum, the foreign policy critical theory provides an indigenous analytical framework for conceptualization of Islamic Republic of Iran’s foreign policy. This gets more significance because presenting a contextualized theory on Iranian foreign policy is the first step to get released from positivist theories, particularly the materialist realism paradigm.

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- Statement by President Ahmadinejad. (2007, Aug) In a meeting with Iran's ambassadors and head of missions abroad in 2007, quoted by Iran, Newspaper 8/2007, pp 1-2
- Waltz, Kenneth. (1979) *Theory of International politics*, Reading, Mass: Adison-Wesky.

Notes

¹ For example see:

Ramazani, Rohollah. (2001) *Theoretical framework for analyzing Islamic Republic of Iran foreign policy*, Alireza Tayeb, Tehran: Ney Publication;
 Sajadpour, Seyed Kazem, (1995) "International Theory and Study of Iran's Foreign Policy: a Research Framework for ", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. IX, Spring;

Hajiyousefi, Amir Mohammad. (2005) *Islamic Republic of Iran Foreign Policy in The Light Of Regional Developments (1991-2001)*, Tehran: Institute for Political and International Studies.

² For example see:

Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. (2005) *Discursive Evolution in Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy*, Tehran: Iran Institute Publication;
 Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. (2007) "Identity and Interest in Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy", in: Davood Kiani, *Islamic Republic of Iran's National Interest*, Tehran: Strategic Studies Research Center;
 Hajiyousefi, Amir Mohammad. (2004) *Iran and Israel from Cooperation to Confrontation*, Tehran: Imam Sadeqh University Publication; Moshirzade, Homeira. (2006) "The Analysis Of Islamic Republic Of Iran Foreign Policy From Constructivism Viewpoints", in Nasrin Mosafa and Hossein Norouzi, *A Look at The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy*; Tehran: Institute for Political and International Studies, pp 13-25; Sotoudeh Arani, Mohammad (2002) " Agent-Structure Relation; A Framework For Study Iran's Foreign Policy Developments", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. XVI, No 1, Spring, pp . 1-32.

³ How to apply critical theory as a conceptual framework to study states' foreign policies is already compiled by the author in which he concludes (in the conclusion section) that Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy would be a suitable case to be assessed within conceptual framework of critical theory in foreign policy. Consequently, the present paper could be regarded as a case study for that work published in Vol. XI of Political Science Research titled: "Critical Theory: a Framework for Foreign Policy Analysis".

⁴ Waltz, Kenneth. (1979) *Theory of International politics*, Reading, Mass: Adison-Wesky.

⁵ For example see:

Kubalkov, V. (2001) *Foreign policy in a Constructed World*, Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe.

For more detail see:

Smith, Steve. (2002) "The United States and the Discipline of International Relations: Hegemonic Country, Hegemonic Discipline", *International Studies Review*, Vol. XIV, No.2, Summer, PP. 67-85.

⁶ For more detail see:

Smith, Steve. (2002) "The United States and the Discipline of International Relations: Hegemonic Country, Hegemonic Discipline", *International Studies Review*, vol4, No.2, Summer, PP. 67-85.

⁷ For more information see:

Ramazani, Rohollah. (2001) *Theoretical Framework for Analyzing Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy*, Alireza Tayeb, Tehran: Ney Publication, pp 14 and 30-36.

⁸ For more details on the foreign policies of the revolutionary governments see:

Halliday, Fred. (1990) *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power*, London: MacMillan Press, LTD.

⁹ For more study see:

Ehteshami, Anoushirvan. (1999) *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Reconstruction Period*, Ebrahim Motaghi and Zohreh Poustinchi, Tehran: Islamic Revolution Document Center, pp 204-232.

¹⁰ Some other analysts of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy have also attempted to present a new concept about it. For example see:

Mohamadi, Manochehr. (2007) *The Future of the International System and Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy*, Tehran: Foreign Ministry Publication Center.

¹¹ For more information see:

Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. "Critical Theory: A Framework for Foreign Policy Analysis", *Political Science Bulletin*, Vol.11 (under publication).

¹² *homo-economicus* or economic man is the concept in some economic theories of man (human) as a rational, perfectly informed and self-interested actor who desires wealth, avoids unnecessary labor, and has the ability to make judgments towards those ends.

¹³ For more discussion on the formation of a state and its interests see:

Cox, Robert W. (1981) "Social Forces, States and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory", *Millennium*, vol. 23, No 2:

Linklater, Andrew. (1990) *Beyond Realism and Marxism: Critical Theory and International Relations*, London: MacMillan.

¹⁴ For more information see:

Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. "Critical Theory: A Framework for Foreign Policy Analysis", *Political Science Bulletin*, Vol. 11 (under publication).

¹⁵ Rohollah Ramazani applies autonomy or freedom of action to analyze the foreign policy of the developing countries and defines foreign policy as follows: "... foreign policy is an attempt to optimize freedom of action in international system to achieve foreign objectives". See: (Rohollah Ramazani, 2001: 41). It will be elaborated that concept of "emancipation" has got more

power compared to "freedom of action" in analyzing Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy.

¹⁶For more information see:

Lecht, John. (1998) *The Contemporary Fifteen Great Thinkers: From Structuralism to Postmodernism*, Translated by Mohsen Hakimi, Tehran: Khojaste Publication, pp. 295-288.

¹⁷ For more details see:

Cox, Robert. (2002) "Universality in International Studies: A Historical Approach", in F. Harvey and M. Brecher, Eds, *Critical Perspectives in International Studies*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

¹⁸ For more studies on the concept of hegemony and counter hegemony see:

Femia, Joseph. (1981) *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*, New York: Oxford University Press, (Robert Cox, 1981); David Harvey. (2001) *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁹ For more study on determinant factors in emancipating foreign policy see:

Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. "Critical Theory: A Framework for Foreign Policy Analysis", *Political Science Bulletin*, Vol.11 (under publication).

²⁰ For more discussion on basics and dimensions of Islamic Republic of Iran identity and its national roles in foreign policy see:

Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. (2007) "Identity and Interest in Islamic Republic of Iran foreign policy", in: Davood Kiani, *Islamic Republic of Iran's National Interest*, Tehran: Strategic Studies Research Center. pp 25-40.

²¹ These five principles were briefly discussed in the previous pages. For more discussion see:

Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. "Critical Theory: A Framework for Foreign Policy Analysis", *Political Science Bulletin*, Vol.11 (under publication).

²² As it will be elaborated later beyond nationalism does not mean transnationalism but it means beyond the nation-state and national boundaries.

²³ For more study see:

Seyed Jalal Dehghani Firouz Abadi, (2005) *Development of Discourse in the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy*, Tehran: Iran Institute publication.

²⁴For more details in world order ideological interest see:

Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. (2007) "Identity and Interest in Islamic Republic of Iran Foreign Policy", in Davood Kiani, *Islamic Republic of Iran's National Interest*, Tehran: Strategic Studies Research Center.

²⁵ <http://www.President.ir/Farsi/government/Plan/index.htm>

²⁶ For more discussion see:

Dehghani Firouz Abadi, Seyed Jalal. (2007) "Justice-based conservative discourse in Ahmadinejad's Foreign Policy", *Political Knowledge*, Vol.III, No 5, Spring and Summer.

²⁷ President Ahmadinejad's interview with Shargh Newspaper, Fall 2005