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## Diplomacy of Iran towards Globalization:

### The Tension between Globalization and Islamization in Iran

#### DIPLOMATIE DE L'IRAN VERS LA MONDIALISATION:

#### LA TENSION ENTRE LA MONDIALISATION ET L'ISLAMISATION EN IRAN

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**Abstract:** The issue of globalization and its impacts on national and local cultures has gained ground recently in scientific research. Infiltration of global forces and foreign cultures into the territory of national and local cultures has led to the formation of the feeling of threat and danger among a great number of societies. This feeling of threat has caused some reaction among the native cultures in the world. As well as many other countries, Iran is concerned about the threats and the weakening of the Iranian cultural and religious values because the cultures and the values have entered its territory through globalization. In fact, this feeling has resulted in the tension between two forces inside the country, i.e., the Iranian Islamic-Religious Culture and Globalization. Each of these forces pursues more penetration in social and cultural arenas in Iran. Such tension is, in fact, between the two forces named "Islamization" and globalization.

**Key words:** Globalization; Islamization; Cultural invasion; Iran' diplomacy

**Resumé:** La question de mondialisation et ses impacts sur des cultures nationales et locales a gagné du terrain récemment dans la recherche scientifique. L'infiltration de forces mondiales et des cultures étrangères dans le territoire de cultures nationales et locales a entraîné à la formation du sentiment de menace et le danger parmi un grand nombre de sociétés. Ce sentiment de menace a causé un peu de réaction parmi les cultures natales dans le monde. Aussi bien que beaucoup d'autres pays, l'Iran est concerné des menaces et l'affaiblissement des valeurs culturelles et religieuses iraniennes parce que les cultures et les valeurs sont entrés à son territoire par la mondialisation. En fait, ce sentiment a abouti à la tension entre deux forces à l'intérieur

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du pays, c'est-à-dire, la Culture Islamique-religieuse iranienne et la Mondialisation. Chacune de ces forces poursuit plus de pénétration dans des arènes sociales et culturelles en Iran. Une telle tension est, en fait, entre les deux forces nommées "l'Islamisation" et la mondialisation.

**Mots-clés:** Mondialisation; Islamisation; Invasion culturelle; L'Iran ' diplomatie

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are different points of views toward globalization, each of which looks at this issue and its consequences from its own point of view. Robertson (1992) does not consider globalization as a "homogenization" force; rather, he considers it as "homogenization" and "heterogenization" in a simultaneous manner. He believes that native cultures and global cultures do not threaten one another, but rather there is a dialectical relationship between them. In contrary to homogenization-oriented points of views, Pieterse (2004) also believes that not only does globalization not terminate the native cultures, but also it paves the ground through an opportunity for their evolution. In fact, he believes that globalization is a kind of cultural "hybridization" that has its roots in the far past and human history.

In contrary to the above mentioned opinions, a group of theoreticians believe in a kind of contradiction between the global culture and the national and native ones. They maintain that globalization results in a kind of homogenization that weakens the native cultures. In this regard, Latouche (1996) states that the western culture is willing to weaken other cultures and infiltrate into other geographical areas. This made Latouche (1996) conclude that West wants to make the whole world westernized, and consequently threaten the Eastern cultures. Ritzer (2006) also refers to "McDonaldization" and establishes his idea on the principles being globalized by McDonald. McDonald is creating a homogenous global consumption culture with its roots referring to the American consumption culture. Therefore, it is the American consumption culture that has been introduced as the global culture and has been infiltrated into other cultures. In his opinion, Barber (1995), also, points to "McWorld" and "Jihad" and believes that there is an everlasting contradiction between these two forces that form the tension between the two forces. In fact, it is better to look at the tension between McWorld and Jihad as the tension between the global culture rooted in American culture and the national and local ones throughout the world. It is within this framework that the tension between global and native cultures has formed in a number of countries. This tension has occurred in Iran between the Iranian Islamic culture and the western one and has become more apparent after the Islamic revolution and the competition between the two forces of "Islamization" and globalization.

The issue of "Islamization" is, in fact, an objection against the process of westernization or globalization. As Tibi (1995, 2-7) also, mentioned, "Islamization" is considered as a kind of cultural strategy and "cultural response" towards westernization. Therefore, it is, in reality, a "Revolt against the West". In other world it is revolting of the Islamic kind of lifestyle against the western kind of lifestyle. In the process of "Islamization" the culture and traditions of non-western society especially the Islamic ones are reinforced through the cultural strategies of Islamic governments. Furthermore, the "Islamization" is a kind of "battle against unbelief" (Tibi,1995, 2). In other word, it refers to the revival of the local against the global. In the Islamization process individualistic, secular and consumerist aspects of the Western culture has to be eliminated from all Islamic society, and the traditional, collectivist and otherworldly aspects of the Islamic culture has to be reinforced and expanded across Islamic society again (Tibi,1993. Godazgar, 2007). In order to achieve the goals of Islamization process all of sciences especially social sciences and humanities must be "de-westernized" and Islamic kind of knowledge ought to be reinforced across Islamic society. It means that Islamic governments or groups have to eliminate "epistemological imperialism of the West" throughout the Islamic society (Sardar, 1985, 85). This issue may lead to establishing of the "Islamic revolution" against the West. In fact, the "Islamic revolution" is an attempt for "de-westernizing" of Islamic concepts and knowledge in the age of global modernity and globalization (Tibi, 1995).

The issue of "de-westernization" also refers to the process of "de-westernization of communication" in the current age (Khiabany, 2003). the idea of "de-westernization of communication" is an idea which has focused on the Islamic model of communication and society. In other word, it indicates "Islamization" of

media communication in the age of the West's media domination. In such theory, Islam is considered as force which has driven Islamic society during the history. In fact, Mowlana has established his theory based on the issue of *Tablig* (propagation) in the Islam. The issue of *Tablig* in the Islam means propagating of some Islamic principles in the Islamic world, which are: "*tawhid*"<sup>3</sup>, "*amr bi al-m'ruf wa nahy'an al munkar*"<sup>4</sup>, "*Umma*"<sup>5</sup>, "*taqwa*"<sup>6</sup> (Mowlana, 1996, 119). It should be noted that from such viewpoint Islamic government and media must only propagate the above mentioned Islamic principles across Islamic society (Khiabany, 2003). It is, in fact, against the western kind of propaganda which has focused on the issues of materialism, secularism, and individualism.

After the revolution, the policy of Iran's Islamic government was based on the strengthening of Islamic nationalism. The Islamic government has intended to establish an Islamic identity based on the ideology of *umma*. The idea of *umma* is an Islamic principle that has let the Islamic government to assemble the Iranian Muslims around the Islamic culture (Godazgar and Fathi, 2005). The Islamic government believed that there is only one way for encountering the West, capitalism and materialism which is reviving and strengthening of Islamic culture and identity among Iranian people. In order to achieve this goal, anti-western, anti-materialism, and anti-imperialism feelings must be reinforced across the Iran's society. Furthermore, one of the goals of Islamic government, after the revolution, has been establishment of an "uniform lifestyle" based on the Islamic culture. This uniform lifestyle was considered, in fact, as barrier against expansion of western and consumerist lifestyle across the Iran's Islamic society (Godazgar, 2007).

Mowlana (1989) refers the issue of "Islamization" of media in Iran after the Islamic revolution. He stated that, after the revolution, the Iran's Islamic government has forbidden advertising of commercials through the media. According to the issue of "Islamization", Islamic media are not allowed to propagate un-Islamic commercials in the Islamic Iran. Islamic media are allowed only to advertise Islamic culture and Islamic commercials across the Iran's Islamic society (Mowlana, 1997).

## **2. THE VICTORY OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION OF IRAN**

Before the Islamic revolution, urbanization has been coincided with such an inevitable Westernization that included radio, TV, cinema, commercial advertisements, clothing styles, meal habits, educational system, as well as youth national organization. Popular magazines during Pahlavi era contained the propagations for sexual freedom, western cosmetics, and fashion. Iranian culture before the revolution was greatly influenced by the Western culture that caused chaos in the values system in Iran the reason of which was the political governors (Persian-Gulf Website,2005). Regarding Westernization of the Iranian people before the Islamic revolution Bahonar quoted:

"In fact, what influenced people more than the economical problems was the change in social and cultural structures of Iran under the impact of Western culture. In fact, neglecting the dominant religious values and the demands of the religious leaders, aberrant behavior in sexual relations, prevalence of corruption and prostitution, lack of observing the general modesty, and changing the Islamic history offended the religious sensitivity of the Iranian society" (Bahonar,1992.23).

The two processes of urbanization and Westernization in Iran have founded the political and cultural backgrounds of a historical tension between two forces of Islamization and Westernization. The conquerors of this struggle were the revolutionists whose common mottoes were both the rejection of the autocratic powers and the model of modernization before the revolution (Persian-Gulf Website,2005). In fact, the Islamic Revolution of Iran was a cultural uprising and it was because of its religious nature which caused the change in ethical and cultural structures of Iranian society. In this regard, Imam Khomeini stated, "This advancement of Iranian nation was due to the change in peoples' souls; without this change, i.e., the change

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<sup>3</sup> "*Tawhid*" means "monotheism" (Mowlana, 1996, 119).

<sup>4</sup> It is "doctrine of responsibility, guidance and action" (Mowlana, 1996, 119).

<sup>5</sup> *Umma* is an Islamic community based on believing on the unity of God and world (Mowlana, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> *Taqwa* refers to "the principle of piety" (Mowlana, 1996, 119).

in the souls, the True Change which is the replacement of a dictator regime with an Islamic regime was completely impossible" (Imam Khomeini, 1982:207).

Islamic revolution indicated that the Islamic culture is rooted in the Iranian hearts. Actually, the revolution was established for the revival and manifestation of Islam in Iranian society and its main end was the revival of the spiritual Islamic culture. Referring to the statements of the revolutionists, one finds out that the main goal of the Islamic Revolution was saving and reviving the Islamic culture inside Iran. Shahid Bahonar (Bahonar, 1992:321) in this regard wrote, "In the Islamic revolution, Cultural Revolution is dominant and if the economical and political revolutions are based on the Cultural Revolution, we consider the roots of this revolution as cultural". Also Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 1992:231) on the Islamic revolution stated, "I consider the great conquer and the main consequence of this revolution in the cultural aspect. This is the main result of this revolution".

### **3. THE ISLAMIZATION PLAN IN IRAN AFTER THE REVOLUTION**

In the early years of the revolution, the Islamic-political ideological beliefs have become the dominant political belief and the self-awareness rubric due to several factors including the political assembly and the performance of the ideological institutions of the government. This caused the whole attempt of the leaders during the first two decades of the revolution in order to create a culture compatible with the values, manners, and Islamic life style of the Iranian people (Bashireie, 2002). Hence, revolutionists put the Islamization Program on top of their priorities. The revolutionist government considered it as its duty to control the private and the public affairs of people's life in order to establish a society based on the Islamic ethics. In this respect, revolutionists started the reviving process of the political and cultural identities. They developed this revival through Islamization Programs in all aspects of individual and social life (Bashireie,2002.Persian-Gulfwebsite, 2005 ).

The Islamization Program was based on a jurisprudential approach to Islam according to which the first duty of the religious government was concurrence of all aspects of the individual and social life within the framework of the 'Islamic Sharia'. The main goal of the Islamic revolution was the substitution of all the materialistic values into the Islamic ones; in other words, the rejection of all the non-Islamic values and the emphasis on the Islamic values were the most important objectives of the Founder of the Islamic Revolution (zo-elm, 2000). In order to achieve these goals, the purgation of the Iranian society from the corruptions and the evil aspects of the semi-modern societies and also the revival of the Islamic, religious, and cultural values have become the most important tasks of the Islamic regime. Islamization of the social relationships between men and women, revival of clothes style for women, execution of the policy of gender separation in all recreational and educational institutes (except for the universities) and in public transportations, prohibition of non-Islamic pleasures and entertainments (like discos, night clubs, gambling houses, and bars), as well as supervision of recreational centers like parks, purgation of public places like restaurants, gyms, and hotels, all are the indicators of the will of the Islamic regime for the implementation of an appropriate Islamic society based on the Islamic culture. Cultural policy makers discussed that for the effectiveness of the Islamization programs, it is necessary to defend the cultural atmosphere of the country against the cultural invasion of the West. The prohibition of video activities in the first decade of the revolution and the prohibition of the satellite TV channels are some indicators of the Islamic republic regime's emphasis on cultural support (Persian-Gulf Website, 2005).

Imam Khomeini proposed that rejection of the infiltration of the Western Culture was of great importance within the Islamization process. He believed that the western culture is corrupted and it should be eliminated from the Islamic Iranian culture. Imam Khomeini has internalized the Iranian culture and discredited the rules against the Islamic rules. He also discredited the law for family support of the year 1967 in which marriage has been secularized and some limitations has been considered for men's authority for divorce. He also lowered the legal age of marriage from 18 (based on the rule of the year 1968) to 14. Wearing neckties and short-sleeved shirts were prohibited. Women were encouraged to obey the Islamic

*Hijab*,<sup>7</sup> and airing western movies and music by the Iranian Radio-TV was banned. In the summer of 1980 *Hijab* was announced obligatory and secular courts were replaced by Islamic courts (Mahdi, 2003).

## **Voice and Vision of Islamic Republic**

One of the most important organizations for Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Republic government was National Iranian Radio Television (NIRT). This organization played an important role in the production and development of cultural and Islamic identity after the revolution. Imam Khomeini appointed Ghotbzadeh as the head of the Islamic radio and television. He also announced Ali Larijani as the supervisor of Television's day-to-day in the first decade of the revolution. Larijani was Ayatollah Motahari's son-in-law who was considered very reliable by Imam Khomeini. Saeid Rajaei Khorasani was announced as the administrator of radio. He was one of the students of Ayatollah Motahari. Larijani and Rajaei Khorasani founded an Islamic association and called it the Islamic Association of the Radio-TV (RTV) staff. This association had a number of goals and acted in the following order: firstly, the association started to plan the changes of the contents of radio and television programs. They purged non-devoted producers and playwrights. Secondly, purgation made the ground for entrance of new Islamic associations in NIRT. On the other hand, purgation of the former experts caused the entrance of non-professional individuals to the organization. Thirdly, the association compiled some plans in which religious leaders and mullahs were allowed to have discussions on Islamic and ethical issues (Mohammadi, 2003.11-12).

Islamic television was completely different from that of Pahlavi era. During Pahlavi era, the TV announcers wore open-collared shirts and tie. However, in Islamic television wearing ties was banned and was considered as westernization. After the revolution the content of most of the programs became greatly Islamic and the production of domestic Islamic programs was still inchoate. The main productions in the first decade of the revolution were: '*Tanzavaran*', a program about banished Iranians; '*Badbanha*', a historical-dramatic program about Mashroote (constitutional) revolution and the role of a leader named Modarres; and '*Akhlagh Dar Khanevadeh*' (ethics in the family), about the Islamic skills of life and ethical principles in an Islamic family (Mohammadi,2003.19).

In spite of the changes in NIRT, Imam Khomeini was not satisfied with its efficiency. Therefore, with suggestion of Hashemi Rafsanjani, Imam appointed Mohammad Rafsanjani, Hashemi Rafsanjani's brother, the spokesman of the *Beyt* (House) as the administrator of NIRT and he became the second official general administrator of RTV. Despite the goals declared by "Cultural Revolution" committee for producing domestic programs and attracting the audience, RTV organization was not very successful in achieving this goal. One of the main plans of this organization was the decision taken for decreasing of airing the imported movies and programs. Nevertheless, until the beginning of the 1990s, airing the foreign movies was more than domestic ones. Moreover, because of the purgation policy in NIRT and the decrease in professional production, there was some dissatisfaction on Iranians' behalf. A survey among the market of Tehran revealed that 51 percent of the responders were not satisfied because of the decrease in entertainment programs and new movies aired through television. 33 percent of them because of the lack of educational programs and 8 percent because of the lack of public affairs programs were not satisfied with the current conditions. This survey also revealed that people were not satisfied with radio because of the lack of both entertainment as well as informational and social programs. Based on this study, 68 percent of people used programs of the foreign radios (Mohammadi, 2003).

## **4. DEVELOPING OF COMMUNICATION DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF RAFSANJANI**

As the war ended, the relationship with other countries and international organizations recovered because of the need for reconstruction after the damages caused by war. After the war between Iran and Iraq, Hashemi's government started the first five-year Economic Plan. In this period of time, Hashemi was

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<sup>7</sup> *Hijab* means Islamic cover for women in the Islamic culture.

seeking the implementation of the Privatization Plan to be in line with the goals of International Money Foundation (IMF). The emergence of technocrats and technologists by Hashemi in regard to the development and the re-constructing of Iran led to an open atmosphere and well-grounded relationships with other countries. Open economic, communication, and press atmosphere as well as dissatisfaction of Iranian people because of the programs of RTV caused more interest in them for pursuing foreign programs and installing satellite dishes (Mahdi, 2003).

The communication structure of Iran has gained strength in the process of development since 1994. In relation to achieving the goals of Economic Reform Plan, government developed the electronic and media communication. In the early 1990s, a competition started between bureaucratic organizations such as HCI and Data communication Company of Iran (DCI). This competition made the atmosphere open for the private sector and this sector became an important factor in the area of electronic communication in Iran (Rahimi, 2008). Creation of IRANET (the information and communication network of Iran) in 1993 by N, JRad indicates the first important step toward introduction of internet to Iranian people. IRANET as a great advertisement-communication system provided full access to internet, E-mail services, electronic publications and web-site designing. It also helped several organizations in trading in an online environment (Rahimi, 2008). In the governmental sector, Data Communication Company of Iran (DCI) had a lot of activities in the area of internet services. Immediately, this company claimed the exclusion of electronic communication in Iran. The large and expensive projects of x.25 switches and Iran Pack Network of BBS, Saba voice network, and so forth provided the possibility of establishing communication among 20000 of clients possible in the year 1995 by use of a 19600 b/s communication with Canada and also paved the way for transferring data through tele-communication centers of the country. In the following years and by implementing a Vast 64 kb/s line through (Persian) Gulf Net of Kuwait, this company expanded its services (Ashna, 2007).

Beside the issue of internet in the period of Rafsanjani's presidency, the issue of expansion and private use of satellite dishes became very important. In contrary to internet that was experiencing its first phases of development, the issue of using satellite receivers formed a number of reactions among religious and cultural leaders in Iran. Until late 1995 about 60 satellite channels were accessible in Iran. Before development of the satellite dishes in Iran, most of the Iranian people were provided with the programs produced based on the Islamic principles by the Islamic television. In that time, the government was mostly after controlling the films, videos, and domestic programs; hence, no control existed on the satellite receiving equipments (Mohammadi, 2003).

According to the editorial of Soroosh Magazine, people were attracted to addiction to drugs and corrupted Western Culture because they didn't have anything to do and nowhere to go in their free times (Mohammadi, 2003). Infiltration of Western Culture decreased during those years because of airing satellite programs and Farsi channels and its target was the Islamic culture and the values of Iranian society. This issue made a number of representatives of the parliament object the policies of Rafsanjani government and its lack of control on satellite equipments. The worry of the leaders of the Islamic Republic about infiltration of Western Culture was so serious that Ayatollah Khamenei proposed the issue of "cultural invasion" in the year 1993 (Tabatabaei, 2003).

Proposing the issue of cultural invasion was the indicator of the severe intention of the Islamic Republic to defend the penetration of the West thoughts in Iranian society. In this regard, in 1993 a number of the representatives of the parliament criticized the airing of satellite programs in Iranian Radio-TV programs and the performance of Mohammad Hashemi as the administrator of Radio-TV section. A group of the representatives criticized Rafsanjani's government because of its unsuccessful performance in positioning against cultural invasion and decreasing the effective programs in order to stop the infiltration of Western Culture pursuing the distortion of the Pure Islam. Ayatollah Khamenei, in his words, referred to satellite as a western plot against the Islamic culture. According to the letter sent from Ayatollah Khamenei's office to Ayatollah Araki, Araki announced the usage of satellite as '*Haraam*' (religiously prohibited) (Mohammadi, 2003). Hence, Objector representatives asked for prohibition of satellite based on the religious decree of Ayatollah Araki. In the early months of 1994, after the decrease in the number of satellite dishes on the roofs of Tehran and other cities of Iran, representatives of the fourth parliament offered the bill of "Prohibition of the Usage of Satellite Facilities" to the head board in order to defend against the cultural invasion. This bill was approved in Iranian parliament on January 1995 and was verified in the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution on February 1995. As a result of this verification, police forces wrest

approximately all the dishes in the middle of 1995. By approving this law, the situation was ready for the legal forces to defend the cultural borders of the country. In the article 5 of the law for 'Prohibition of the Usage of Satellite Facilities', it is stated, "Voice and Vision Organization and Cultural Ministry are allowed to record and air the satellite programs that are not in contradiction with the values and the principles of Islamic and national culture". In the articles of 8 and 9 of this law, cash fines from 10 to 100 million *Rials*<sup>8</sup> were determined for the importers, producers, and distributors, and also the fines from 1 to 3 million *Rials* were proved to be taken into effect on the users of satellite facilities. After approving this law, the sixth government (Rafsanjani government) prepared the executive regulations and hereby police forces started to wrest the satellite dishes from the roofs of houses and apartments; however, because of the large amount of criticisms they stopped this wresting (Vaziri, 18/6/2006).

In parallel to the law for "Prohibition of the Usage of Satellite Facilities" in the parliament, and because of great amounts of criticisms to the performance of Mohammad Hashemi, the administrator of RTV, Ali Larijani was appointed to this position with the support of Ayatollah Khamenei and Natagh Noori, the speaker of the *Beyt* (House). In order to support Ali Larijani, the budget of RTV increased by the parliament and only about 5 billion Tomans approved for the production of movies and TV programs in order to compete with the globalization and satellite cultural invasion. In his first year of management, Larijani established a company named Sima Film. His goals for establishing this company were: First, expending the 50-billion budgets in private sector for increasing the production of movies and TV programs. Second, changing the ratio between producing and airing of TV programs by the mass media in an increasing fashion within the country. Third, being sure about the production of programs and movies in the framework of Islamic culture and enhancing piety and Islamic ethics in cinema productions.

Beside the development of the activities of the private companies in producing movies and TV programs, Larijani tried to attract the domestic audience to national media through dubbing and airing the satellite programs in the national media. He declared in an interview that "Islamic Republic Voice and Vision Organization has reviewed about 60 international channels, has dubbed some of the programs, and, as a consequence, it will air them through the domestic media". He said, "Some of the programs of TV channels are useful but some of them are not compatible with the Islamic culture codes and should be edited" (Mohammadi, 2003.31-32).

## **5. PRESIDENCY OF KHATAMI**

After its start on August 1997, Khatami's government announced its development plan goals in the years ahead. The Third Economic Development plan started and the attempt for absorbing the foreign investment began. Khatami was seeking the development of the interaction of Iran with other parts of the world. Khatami's policies inside the country, i.e., cultural, social, and political open atmosphere resulted in more freedom among Iranians. Khatami, on the one hand, developed the communication, media, and internet facilities inside Iran through his own policy of tolerance; and on the other hand, he probed into the real position of Iran in international arena. In this respect, there were many attempts in his time for creating and developing international satellite networks.

### **5.1 Development of Satellite Networks and Privatization in Voice and Vision**

In relation to the goals of Khatami's government in the development of the relationships of the Iranians with the outside world, and also in order to attract the Iranians outside the country to domestic cultural productions, Ali Larijani, the administrator of INRT established Iranian satellite networks. In 1997, IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) launched a 24-hour network called Jam-e-Jam that was aired by EUTELL SAT (European Satellite Union). This network contained news, information, entertainment, dramatic series, feature films, Iranian music, and comedy movies with English subtitles. IRIB increased the number of Jam-e-Jam channels to 3 more channels and started airing programs in 30 foreign languages and dialects like English, Germany, Russian, Arabic, etc (Mohammadi, 2003).

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<sup>8</sup> *Rials* is currency of Iran

In domestic realm, also, Voice and Vision increased its channels to 5 more channels beside a new news network. According to article 44 of constitutional law and based on the change in this article, Larijani emphasized on the plan of establishment of private film production companies (BBC, 2009). In less than a year, 60 companies got the license of producing film by Sima Film and about 4,000,000 \$ loans were given to the private sector for producing domestic films that are capable of attracting the Iranian audience. The policy of IRIB was attracting more Iranians to domestic cultural production and keeping them away from internet and satellite programs. Evidences show that IRIB was not successful in its attempt. The ideological dominant approach in Voice and Vision and the lack of experts for producing programs in attracting Iranian youngsters made a part of Iranian citizens look for other substitution mass media for official Iranian TV (Mohammadi, 2003. BBC, 2009). Inefficiency of Iranian Voice and Vision was contemporary to an increasingly expansion of internet and satellite programs inside Iran. Therefore, this concurrence increased the number of the audiences of the satellite networks and internet in Iran.

## **5.2 Expansion of the satellite programs in Khatami's Presidency**

After the reform government began its endeavor, Ataollah Mohajerani, the Minister of Culture, announced, among the students of Azad University, that the reform of the satellite law will be reviewed in the government board. This statement was an indicator of the criticism of the law for prohibition of satellite by the government (Vaziri, 2006). Because of the laxity of government in reviewing this law, reformist representatives took the motto of reforming the law of satellite prohibition from the government and reviewed it in the reformist parliament. The representatives that considered the situation suitable offered the bill of "Media Comprehensive System Plan" in 2002. The optimist representatives pursued to determine some principles and criteria for airing satellite programs and started to reform the satellite law. Parliament approved a law based on which the Ministry of Culture form a committee composed of the representatives of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs and Voice and Vision Organization and this committee prepare the regulations for airing the satellite programs in three months and then communicate it after being approved by the board of ministers to the parliament. However, this bill was objected by the Council of the Guardians of the constitution (Vaziri, 2006).

In spite of the objection of the Council of Guardians of the constitution with this bill, usage and airing of the satellite programs increased in Iran. Gradually, smaller dishes were replaced by bigger dishes. Being able to use the new dishes, people were able to access several channels of Turkey and other countries. Due to the policy of tolerance by Khatami in the permission of free usage of satellite facilities, and also due to the increase in the number of Farsi channels, the number of the purchasers of such facilities increased gradually. Smaller sizes of dishes of about 60 to 100 Cm made it easier to install; hence, people could make use of them secretly (Mohammadi, 2003. Alikhah, 2008).

Among different satellites that were broadcasting radio and television signals in Iran, Hotbird was more popular because of its variety and quality of signals. This satellite includes channels of different languages among which there were a number of Farsi ones. Most of the shareholders of this satellite are Italian, German, and French. Hotbird includes about 800 television channels and 500 radio channels. Among the channels of this satellite Boomrang, Vox, RTL, Fashion, Multivision, Action, Cinfox, and Cinepolar were more popular among Iranian audiences. During the recent years Nilesat, and Arabsat became the next popular satellites among Iranians. Iranian youngsters twisted from the political programs to entertainment, American and Arabic shows, and other attracting programs mostly aired by channels like MBC1, MBC2, MBC4, ONE TV, Nojoom, Rotana, Arabic Melody, and LBC. After these satellites, the channels of Turksat and Telstar satellites are more popular because of airing American movies and Turkish shows (Alikhah, 2008).

## **5.3 Development of Internet Services and Prevalence of Internet Program**

During Khatami's presidency, the number of the providers of internet services and facilities increased. In contrary to the presidency of Rafsanjani during which internet was used only for academic purposes, in the period of Khatami's, internet and computer penetrated in private and public realms of the society. Being formed in business atmosphere, internet started to become popular in other classes and groups of the society. Non-academic people used internet as a different world besides doing their own chores and business



activities. Until 2001, only in Tehran about 1500 internet cafés were established, and Iran was considered as one of the pioneers in the Middle East in terms of the number of internet cafés. In contrary to satellite, internet had more importance and infiltration among youngsters because of the lack of control on the government behalf. As a type of media, internet resulted in more relationships between the Iranian and foreign youngsters. Internet caused a number of dramatic changes in Iran (Rahimi, 2008). As a consequence of the increase in the number of internet cafés, voice chats, and webcams, as some cheap ways of communication among youngsters, were of utmost importance resulting in some challenges toward the Islamic government and its moral codes. For instance, the limitations of the relationship between men and women were disappeared excessively in chat rooms and virtual space in the Internet. Along with the expansion of internet in Iran, some other phenomena increased in Iran. More than 20000 weblogs, websites, and online newspapers became active and paved the ground for exchanging information and developing the relationships between the Iranian youngsters (Rahimi, 2008).

Before 2001 government did not interfere with or control the affairs of internet explicitly. For accessing the Internet, no permission was needed by the government or any other organization and institute. There were no regulations that oblige the service providers to inform the governmental organizations about the contents of the programs or the information of the users. The number of the internet cafes was on the rise and there was no rule for the ways of establishing and running them. In parallel to the increasing number of the internet users, according to the Third Development Plan, DCI Company proposed the national project of data to increase the internet users and provide more than 200 asymmetrical ports of ADSL with the speed of more than 8 Mb/s in 8 big cities of Iran for live multimedia and video programs (Ashna, 2007). Also until 2003, Iranian government had no systematic strategy for filtering the websites and their contents. Accessing internet was in such a condition that Guardian Newspaper reported on February 2002 that Pars Online is one of the greatest internet providers in Iran and it provides ADSL connections the speed of which is 4 times more than the speed in the houses of Germany (Ashna, 2007).

On the other hand, internet provided some suitable circumstances for religious preachers in Iran. Islamic government was able to preach its Islamic ideology (*Shia*) through the internet. According to some Mullahs, internet is a blessing for preaching the statements and words of the prophet and it has many advantages for the Islamic culture and religion. Government supported the establishment of religious centers in some religious cities like Qom and Mashhad. In such centers, some experts were employed for designing websites and homepages. The duty of these websites was to provide the audience with different interpretations of *Hadith*<sup>9</sup>, Quran, and religious affairs. They also were able to answer the religious questions and requests of people. One of these centers established in 1997 was Ayatollah Golpayegani's Computer Center in Qom. The above mentioned center provided online information and interpretations of religious authorities for the usage of internet users (Rahimi, 2008).

Based on the statistics, at the end of Khatami;s presidency, about 5 million Iranian families searched for their cultural and educational needs through satellite communication and about 1 million families were connected to the internet world of information and communication (Zareei, 2004). Survey also showed that there were about 2 million illegal satellite receivers all over the country. Moreover, about 24 million urban youngsters met their social values as well as norms by getting their everyday information through internet and satellite (Mohammadi, 2003). The cultural and social products were accessible for people easily through mass communication and achieved their position gradually. Every day a number of values, habits, and norms flourished inside Iranian society, which were at least not Iranian and not Islamic and there was no cultural and ethical relation between them and the Iranian culture (Zareei, 2004). The western culture referred to as the global culture is spreading over the Iranian society through both satellite networks and vast global networks of internet as well as through news networks like BBC and CNN. By casting a glimpse at the wearing and hairstyles of girls and boys in Iran, their imitation of the western styles, their dancing parties and their tendency toward the western music and values, one can simply perceive the deep penetration of western culture in Iranian society (Saiadi, 2006. BBC, 2009).

Computer and internet are modern technological products that have been formed in the framework of modern pursuing individualistic, secular, democratic, and industrialized values and processes. Computer and internet are signs of modern technological development which is considered as a sign of being modern. The most important challenge arising from modernization and its values is the contradiction between

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<sup>9</sup> *Hadith* is holy words of prophet and twelve imams

modern values and attitudes and the traditional culture. In spite of the fact that Iranian society has got social-oriented values in essence, digital tools like computer and internet strengthen the individual-oriented values (Fazeli, 2007). In this regard, Eftekhari, one of the professors of Imam Sadegh University believes that the waves of globalization and media have resulted in the formation of secular trends in religious societies like Iran and their target is stability and permanency of religious beliefs in Iran (Eftekhari, 2003).

## **6. PRESIDENCY OF AHMADINEJAD AS RESPONSE TO INFILTRATION OF GLOBALIZATION IN KHATAMI'S PRESIDENCY**

Ahamadinejad's government should be considered as a barrier to the penetration and propagation of Western Culture in Iran and a new attempt to form a new trend of Islamization inside the Iranian society and a barricade against globalization. The attempts of the previous governments for developing the relationships with international societies, development in media and communication services, and also their laxity in confronting with the western culture resulted in the infiltration of western culture among Iranian youths. The parliament representative Javad Arianmanesh criticized the dominant tolerance policy in the previous governments. He stated,

"In the Fourth Development Plan, the emphasis is on cultural development. Ahmadinejad's government should help the enhancement of religious knowledge and wisdom in relation to Quran and Ahlebayt (Family of the Prophet), the strengthening of the ethical habits, the sacrifice mood, national unity, and confrontation with the cultural invasion" (Nezafati, 2006).

Ahmadinejad's government believes that during the recent years the West has followed the development of secular and western values within Iranian society through economical development plans, privatization, and development of communication media. Parviz Davoodi, the first deputy of Ahmadinejad's government stated in this regard, "Capitalist regimes tried to penetrate into Iran through the path of Fifth Development Plans of the country. They tried to permeate into the plans of the country based on Humanism and Secularism adopted by the US policies and the West" (Davoodi, 2007). Government organized its cultural policies according to the positions taken by Ayatollah Khamenei. The supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, emphasized, "Nowadays, there is a great cultural invasion against Islam whose target is not the revolution itself, and this invasion is much vaster than the revolution against Islam. This is a wonderful and extraordinary thing that enters the battlefield against Islam in all cultural, social, and political aspects" (Hasani, 2006). The cultural policies of Ahmadinejad's government are based on the same issue of cultural invasion. Cultural and political leaders believe that in confronting with cultural invasion, one should not act passively, but one should create thought chambers and determine the religious principles; hence, this confrontation with cultural invasion should be started right from the universities and Hozeh (the religious school) (Nezafati, 2006). The member of the Islamic parliament Laleh Eftekhari stressed on the recent speech of Ayatollah khamenei about 'Cultural Invasion', "As the supreme leader stated, aside from the threats against the Iranian nation, there is a cultural penetration, and this invasion is clear in the change of wearing, styles, and manners" (Eftekhari, 2009).

Ahmadinejad's government began its attempts for confronting with and decreasing the penetration of the foreign culture and individualistic and secularist values in different ways:

### **6.1 Intensification of Satellite Prohibition**

Ahmadinejad's government proposed the project of the prohibition of the satellites to be taken into effect again. The parliament representative Saeed Abootaleb offered the bill for 'managed usage of satellite' in 2006 according to Fourth Development Plan and based on the regulations of IRIB. This bill was sent to the Committee of Art and Media of the parliament with the signature of 50 representatives (Vaziri, 2006). According to this bill, users of the illegal facilities of satellite have a three-month opportunity to submit their dishes to the related stations erected by the government. Based on this bill, followed by two written

warnings to the users of satellite facilities, and in the case of not submitting satellite facilities, the offenders will be fined from 5 to 50 million *Rials* in cash. According to the article 9 of this bill, illegal producers, distributors, importers, and installers will be fined from 100 to 500 million *Rials* in cash. According to this bill using the satellite is prohibited except for the cases determined by the law. According to the article 2 of this bill, police and *Basij*<sup>10</sup> forces should wrest the illegal satellite facilities. Due to this bill many dishes in many cities of Iran especially Tehran were wrested and law breakers were fined (Vaziri,2006. Etelaat,2006).

## **6.2 Expansion of the Activities and Cultural Productions of Voice and Vision**

One of the most important areas which has been emphasized during the presidency of Ahmadinejad is the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since Ahmadinejad's government, the administrator of Voice and Vision Organization has been Zarghami. He has tried to keep Voice and Vision within the frontier of confronting with cultural invasion. Inside the country, Voice and Vision has sought cultural organization and reconstruction of the society more seriously since Zarghami. Darabi, the deputy of parliament affairs and provinces of radio-television stated in regard to the efficiency of Voice and Vision in confronting with cultural invasion stated, "Nowadays, the national media, on the one hand, should be in frontier of confronting with the cultural invasion and on the other hand, mass media should do its best in management of public opinions and cultural construction of the country" (Darabi, 2006).

During the recent years, in regard to achieving its goals, Voice and Vision was in pursue of increasing its production level, airing television programs, and increasing the number of the TV channels. In fact, national media in Iran equals the existence of 91 channels that air their programs in 30 live languages of the world among which 65 ones are for the centers of the provinces and cities. There are about 38 provincial, local, and urban radio channels whose production and airing in the year 84 were about 250,000 hours, i.e., 800 times more than the year 1978. In the year 2005, about 276,000 hours of different programs were produced and about 79932 hours were aired. Voice and Vision also tried to increase the budget of the provincial programs about 26%. Also, a plan named 'management of the public opinions' was prepared for the centers of the provinces which should achieve the following goals:

- To provide the youth with efficient native patterns;
- To justify the *Hijab* issue and suggest a suitable pattern for women in programs suitable to their status in society and also inform women of the enemies' plots against the Islamic revolution;
- To attempt to preach and develop Islamic and *Quranic* ethics, especially increase the contents of the *Quranic* channels and defend the revolutionary values and goals of Imam Khomeini (Darabi, 2006).

## **6.3 Increasing and Development of Cultural and Artistic Centers of Mosques**

Cultural and artistic centers of mosques were established on March 1993 with the approval of Cultural Revolution Council in order to guard against the cultural invasion of West. These centers have again been put into use during Ahmadinejad's government for strengthening the Islamic values in the society. Before the year 2005, the number of the cultural and artistic centers of mosques was 2400. However, during Ahmadinejad's government, the number of these centers increased to 5000 from the year 2006 to 2008 because of the government's support. This number was said to increase to 6000. These centers have been active in holding educational programs and festivals in different fields related to Quran, poetry, literary texts, visual arts, and modern methods of teaching religious ethics (Taskhiri, 2009).

Arianmanesh, the vice manager of cultural committee of the parliament stated, "In order to confront with the cultural invasion we need 'Devoted Mosque Forces'. This shows the importance of these centers for the government. Government has a new attitude toward these centers in order to strengthen and develop the revolution and the Islamic values. From the regime leaders' unanimous point of view, cultural and artistic centers of mosques are suitable cultural institutes for the youths and teenagers because these centers are

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<sup>10</sup> *Basij* is a revolutionary force in Iran.

considered to be the basis of the Islamic revolution. Government seeks to develop and expand the activities of these centers. The dramatic advancement of 300 research centers in the country which has made the youths enthusiastic, the engagement of 2 million youths from the ages of 17 to 30 with the centers of the mosques, and the distribution of 2 million books in order to enhance the Islamic culture are a number of the activities that these centers have embarked on. The parliament increased the budget of these centers 800% so that they could have a better condition to engage the youths. The amount of the credits allocated to these centers was 2 billion *Tomans*<sup>11</sup> which was increased in the late years of the Seventh Parliament to 17 billion *Tomans*. Cultural and artistic centers of mosques are of the most popular and democratic non-governmental organizations and are of the utmost importance for the Islamic government. The increase in the budget of these centers indicates the high attention of the government to these centers in confronting with the cultural invasion (Taskhiri, 2009. Arianmanesh, 2009).

#### **6.4 Re-Islamization of Human Science and Purgation of the Universities**

Ahmadinejad's government believes that the public and the local culture of the society should be reconstructed, and hereby a new wave of Islamization should happen in the universities. Hence, re-Islamization should start from the universities. Students are trained in universities and in the case that this training of the students and instructors is not compatible to the Islamic personality, it harms the goals of Cultural Revolution. Piroozmand, the Board Member of the Humanities Cultural Center of Qom stressed, "We had a flagrant mistake in the educational system, i.e., our goal is training expert forces for the market. Our goal should be training individuals regarding the Islamic ethics" (Tavangar, 2008).

During Ahmadinejad's presidency, the government emphasis was on a number of areas concerning the cultural and social problems arising from the foreign impact of media in the educational and cultural realms: firstly, some fundamental changes have been made in the Education and Training Sector based on the philosophy of Islamic ethics. In order to achieve this goal, government has attempted to regulate the five-year strategic Plan of Education and Training Sector and also to follow a 20-year Plan for development in the future. Government prepared the 1404 Plan for the Sector of Education and Training; and hence, a dramatic change in the content of the school as well as the university curriculum books within the framework of national curriculum will be achieved. Secondly, some substantial reforms have been formed in the structure of the labor force in Education and Training Sector as well as in universities. Ali Ahmadi, the Minister of Education and Training Sector, stressed on reforming the structure of this ministry, "Our education and training needs both Islamization and modernization. The present situation is far from the Islamic values and dynamic culture of Islam". He also asked for the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Training and other governmental organizations in order to confront with the cultural invasion (Ahmadi, 2009).

In the meeting of the government board in the year 2007, the strategies of using Basiji professors were proposed and the draft of the 5-year Plan of Education and Training Ministry was prepared. Based on this plan any trace of Western Culture should be abolished among the students, thinkers, and professors in Iran (Davoodi, 2007). In order to confront with the western culture, beside training teachers, professors, and students based on the Islamic culture, government has tended to change the content of the textbooks and syllabi of the curriculums of universities based on Islamic thoughts, because in the content of most of the textbooks, the secularist, humanistic, and individualistic thoughts had penetrated in the area of humanities. Therefore, this has caused some concerns among the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Secularist, individualistic, and humanistic thoughts are in contradiction to the Islamic and revolutionary principles. That is why changing the content and purgation of the textbooks from secularist concepts has been one of the most important challenges of the government since the year 2009. In this regard, Ayatollah Khamenei criticized the content of the textbooks of humanities in a meeting with some university professors in 2009 and stated:

"Most of the discussions of humanities are based on the philosophies whose basis is materialism and they consider human as an animal without any responsibility in relation to God. They lack spiritual attitude toward human and world. Thus, translation of such humanities and providing our youngsters with exactly

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<sup>11</sup> Each *Tomans* equal one thousand *Rial*

the same thing is in fact skepticism and disbelief in Islamic and divine values to teach our youngsters. This issue is not appropriate” (Ayatollah Khamenei, 2009).

## 7. CONCLUSION

Since the Islamic revolution in 1979, the attempt for Islamization of the society and a substantial decrease in the infiltration of the Western Culture has begun. Universities and Voice and Vision were the pioneers in this regard. After the eight-year Holy War in Hashemi Rafsanjani’s presidency, the doors of Iran were open to the international societies and the relationship between Iranians and other people of the world increased dramatically.

The policy of tolerance of Khatami increased such relationships and, as a consequence, the presence of Western Culture was increased in cultural and social realms of Iran. This made the Islamic government try to decrease the infiltration of western values such as secularism and humanism within the country. During Ahmadinejad’s presidency, the tension between globalization and Islamization intensified. Ahmadinejad pursued Islamization of universities again in order to confront with cultural invasion. In spite of the attempts of the Islamic government, the number of internet users in Iran has increased significantly. Based on the latest statistics in the year 2009, approximately 23 million people were using internet and this leads us to realize the access of about 34.9% of Iranians to internet. Furthermore, 40% of Iranian people use satellite networks, and in the year 2009 the number of satellite users was doubled in comparison to the year 2008.

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