Direct Broadcasting Satellite (DBS) Policy in The Islamic Republic of Iran: Popular, Religious and State Discourse

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Abstract

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The new communication technology and its implications on national and international relations has been one of the key debates during the last two decades. This received a new impetus with the emergence of Direct Broadcasting Satellite (DBS) together with the convergence of electronic information processing, data bank and telecommunication networks in a single system known as telematic. The DBS system has received increasing attention since it offers a wide range of choice to people. However, in many countries it is also suspected of ravaging culture and sovereignty, while undermining national broadcasting. This sentiment is not shared by all societies and governments, since some believe it has also enhanced freedom and democracy.

The penetration of DBS in Iran began since 1993, when people in the capital and other major cities began to receive images transmitted by dozens of foreign broadcasters. Within a short period of time, satellite became one of the most focal points of interest of the Iranian people and continued alongside the installation of satellite dishes. In April 1994, the state fired the first volley as a warning to the viewers and demonstrated that the period of tolerance was over. This reaction deeply involved government, Majles (Parliament), press and people in an intensive course of satellite discourse followed by fuqaha (pl. Faqih - jurisconsultant in Islamic law) intervention. Here, each groups of participants branched out and took different stances; some appeared in favour, while others stood against foreign satellites. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran passed a bill which prohibited the reception of satellite signals. However, at the same time it put forward a project for developing national radio and television.

In this study, the introduction, penetration and the impact of DBS on the Iranian media sphere, particularly on the broadcasting system, within the context of globalisation, will be discussed. It will also focus on the responses of the Islamic Republic to DBS, by looking at their perspectives and the measures they have taken since the popularisation of DBS in Iran from 1993 until 1997.
To Manijeh, Poyan and Mehran
CHAPTER I

Introduction

CHAPTER II

Theoretical Background

An Overview of Policy-Related Media Theories
An Integrating Framework
Issues of Policy in Relation to New Media
Unifying Theory and Policy Issues
Old and New Media; Old and New Theory
Grand Theories
World System Theory
The Theories of Globalisation

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Description of the characteristics of the research
Case Study Design
Data Collection
A. Interviews
Phases of Interview
B. Printed Materials
Data Analysis

CHAPTER IV

A Brief History of Broadcasting Policies in pre-and post-Revolutionary Iran

An Overview of Press Policies from the Beginning Until the Present Time
Broadcasting and Broadcasting Policies Under the Pahlavi Dynasty
Reza Shah (1925-1941)
The Introduction of Radio and Broadcasting Policy-Making Initiatives
Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1979)
The Penetration of Radio
The Establishment of Television
Broadcasting Policy Under Mohammad Reza Shah
The Structure and Hierarchy
Development Communication
Media-centerism and Development Communication
Hegemonic Policy
Monopoly Regime
Centrifugal Policy
Industrial Policy
Broadcasting and Broadcasting Policy Under the IRI
The IRI's VCRs Policy
The Structure of Broadcasting Policy-making in The Islamic Republic
The Main Characteristics of the IRI Broadcasting Policy
Media Centred View
Dominance/Hegemonic Trend
Centripetal Policy
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**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABU</td>
<td>Aburaihan Birooni University</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCIG</td>
<td>The Commission of Culture and Islamic Guidance (CIGA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHO</td>
<td>Cultural Heritage Organisation</td>
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<td>CIGA</td>
<td>The Commission of Islamic Guidance and Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSRPE</td>
<td>Centre for Study and Research and Programme Evaluation of the VVIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBS</td>
<td>Direct Broadcasting Satellite</td>
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<td>DPP</td>
<td>Department of Publication and Propaganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>European Space Agency</td>
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<td>FSS</td>
<td>Fixed Satellite Service</td>
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<td>FUI</td>
<td>Free University of Iran</td>
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<td>GC</td>
<td>Guardian Council</td>
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<td>GCCL</td>
<td>Guardian Council of Constitutional Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCCR</td>
<td>The High Council of Cultural Revolution</td>
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<td>HCIP</td>
<td>High Council of Islamic Propaganda</td>
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<td>ICA</td>
<td>Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles)</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IPO</td>
<td>Islamic Propaganda Organisation</td>
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<td>IRI</td>
<td>Islamic Republic of Iran</td>
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<td>IRNA</td>
<td>Islamic Republic News Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>Iranian Telecommunication Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>The International Telecommunication Union</td>
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<td>IVM</td>
<td>Institute of Visual Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCHE</td>
<td>Ministry of Culture and Higher Education</td>
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<td>MCIG</td>
<td>Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance</td>
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<td>NIOC</td>
<td>National Iranian Oil Company</td>
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<td>NIRT</td>
<td>National Iranian Radio and Television</td>
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<td>NITV</td>
<td>National Iranian Television</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCA</td>
<td>Organisation for Civil Aviation</td>
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<td>PBC</td>
<td>Plan and Budget Commission</td>
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<td>PBO</td>
<td>Plan and Budget Organisation</td>
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<td>PI</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNU</td>
<td>Payam-e Noor University</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTT</td>
<td>Post, Telegraph and Telephone [Ministry]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCM</td>
<td>The Research Centre of Majles (Markaz-e Pajhohesh-ha-ye Majles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAVAK</td>
<td>Sazeman-e Etell'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar (the Iranian Intelligence Agency)</td>
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<td>TVRO</td>
<td>TV Receiver Only</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>VIR</td>
<td>Version of Islamic Republic (Television)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VSAT</td>
<td>Very Small Apparatus Terminal</td>
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<tr>
<td>VVIR</td>
<td>Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic [of Iran]</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARC</td>
<td>The World Administration Radio Conference</td>
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<td>WIPO</td>
<td>The World Intellectual Property Organisation</td>
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Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter provides theoretical, contextual and historical background to the research. Its purpose also, is to establish a framework for the research, through which the problems of the study are discussed.

The domination of the world economy after World War II, resulted in a high demand for a strong international communication system for the transmission of information. Since then, this need has given way to the accumulation of investment and activity in both areas, that is, communication and information. The outcome has been a significant change in the electronics industry, which in turn has been reflected in the innovation of many new devices suitable for instantaneous, heavy volume transmission of data and information flow, vital to the maintenance of the global economy.

Soon after the communication and information process became the subject of business, its growth accelerated. Here, communication and information products were not only required by professionals but they also found a huge mass market around a world hungry for information and entertainment. The satellite became the manifestation of the new information and communication age. The desire for choice of access to varied channels made it a global business. However, it caused fierce debate. Some believe it extends freedom and democracy. Others fear it will ravage cultures, threaten sovereignty and undermine traditional broadcasting. What is certain, however, is that satellites are changing the world at breathtaking speed.

In fact, despite the saliency of satellite broadcasting in recent years, attention began to be focused on this carrier of broadcasting slightly more than three decades ago. For the first time during the 1960s, when satellites were mostly used for telecommunication, remote sensing, weather, military, security and navigation services (Ganley & Ganley, 1989) the debates about the consequences of this carrier began. At that time, satellite television transmission required a huge, powerful and expensive ground station antenna to receive the satellite signals and distribute them. In addition,
because of the position of these satellites being non-geostationary, they could only transmit a few hours in every 24 hour relay service (Collins, 1990).

The first generations of television satellites consisted of the so-called point-to-point type, i.e. the satellite was generally only concerned with transmitting programme-carrying signals between two earth stations situated at specified fixed points of the globe. The receiving earth station would in turn re-transmit the signals to individual viewers, either through the ether or by cable. This particular mode of transmission is known within the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) nomenclature as "Fixed Satellite Service" (FSS) (Fisher, 1990). Despite the fact that this form of transmission consistently guaranteed the government's control over the broadcasting process, nonetheless, to some extent, it caused anxieties for many of them, even for those who, practically or potentially, had access to satellite, such as the former Soviet Union and France. But it was too early to foresee extensive national and international reactions.

Subsequently, when it was proved that by launching more powerful satellites on geostationary orbit, the home television viewer could easily have access to the programmes of foreign satellite channels, satellite broadcasting became the concern of the international community. This is because it involves the direct transmission of high quality television programmes from one state to home audiences situated in the territory of another state, without the latter state having any practical means of controlling reception. The fact that Direct Broadcasting Satellite (DBS) does not require the intermediary of ground stations to reach national audiences, has removed an essential technical instrument by which governments have, until now, been able to control the point to point transmission of foreign satellite programmes to their territories. Needless to say not all governments shared these anxieties, and those governments who intended to take advantage of the new technologies, strongly supported DBS.

When the feasibility of the direct broadcasting satellite was confirmed technologically, it also became evident that, in contrast to common methods of terrestrial broadcasting by which technological devices could be used for distorting the
unwanted foreign transmission, technical countermeasures involving signal "Jamming", even if legal, have nothing to do with DBS. Similarly, measures to control foreign DBS, undertaken by states on their own territories, might prove to be of limited effectiveness, whether as technological developments or as prohibitions on the sale and distribution of items used for receiving DBS signals. The attempt to implement internationally, the existing terrestrial broadcasting regime also could not be fully adequate in the DBS context, partly because it was based on radio and not on television.

Anxiety about the consequences of the DBS, particularly when forecasting its effects on national sovereignty and identity on one hand, and on the other, the lack of any effective technical means of regulating the inflow of foreign satellite broadcasting, has resulted in an interest on the part of most governments to evolve an internationally valid framework to govern direct broadcasting satellite activities. Work towards this end came to be formally undertaken by the United Nations General Assembly as early as the 1960s. This task was also put on the agenda of many international organisations: such as the United Nations Outer Space Committee, which deals with general international law and space law; The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), whose concern is telecommunication law; The World Administration Radio Conference (WARC, WARC-ST); The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) which deals with copyright law; as well as UNESCO and other international and regional organisations. The most frequently debated foundation of thought for such a framework has been the so-called, "Principal of Prior Consent". Accordingly, the advance permission of a prospective receiving state is a condition for transmission to that state, by a foreign state’s broadcasters.

The world’s first geostationary satellite, Canada’s Anik A-1 was launched in 1972.1 Anik has been used by CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) to interlink its terrestrial transmitters, and not to directly distribute television services to viewers. After Anik, came Hermes, in 1976, which established the first legal direct-to-home

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1one of the decided pioneers of satellite of many types was Canada, both through its Department of Communications (DOC) and through Telesat Canada, a commercial telecommunications carrier established in 1969 by act of parliament to set up a domestic system of communication satellite'. InterMedia, January 1980, Vol. 18, no. 1, P: 7.
satellite service (Collins, 1990). In another part of the world, in Japan, the first commercial direct broadcast satellite to transmit programme-carrying signals to the home television set, the Yuri-2A, was launched in 1984.\textsuperscript{2} The spillover from this satellite to some neighbouring countries caused some tensions. But none of these cases fuelled the fire of debates internationally. Only in February 1989, when the ASTRA system, which was launched in December 1988, offered a wide choice of television programming, by country, by language, and by special interest, did the global nightmare take place. This was followed by the operation of STAR TV in 1991, the first and only pan-Asian TV network broadcasting to 53 countries. Satellite channels began transmitting unfamiliar pictures directly into homes. For the first time in history, the socio-cultural boundaries became indefensible.

The operation of DBS revealed that those principles that were codified to prevent foreign signals have little meaning in practice. The international community failed to make progress in applying the "principal of prior consent", other regulations, related treaties and resolutions, mostly because of the disagreement and intervention of several powerful countries including the United States of America, Britain, Austria, Netherlands and Belgium (Fisher, 1990; Demac, 1986). Loss of faith in international assemblies left every individual country to find their own solution to the problem. However, the paradox is, the very concept of national media policy is now in question.

As stated earlier, a remarkable transnationalisation of corporations flourished after World War II. This development, particularly since the beginning of 1980, paved the way for the globalisation of the economy. Here an economy of information, based on an ever-expanding network of cable and satellite, became the common slogan of the New-Right movement. The United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 1992, clearly indicates the importance of these outlets for such an economy. According to this source, the world capital market, transmits more than $300 billion a day, through international data networks (cited in Martin, 1993).

\textsuperscript{2}Japan launched its first experimental broadcasting satellite in April 1978, to test the viability of satellite transmissions of TV and radio to central Japan and outlying islands'(Ibid. :8).
To turn this slogan into reality, the coalition of neo-conservatives in the "North" industrial countries spent the whole of the 1980s, dealing with the provision of necessary actions for the building of a global communication network suitable for exchanging a huge amount of information. The presupposition was that, without such a developed global communications system, the whole concept of an information-based economy would be worth nothing. The first effective step towards this goal, from their point of view, was the deregulating of the communications systems of the member states. Previously, these countries were exercising different levels of regulation regarding their doctrine of a free market on their own communications systems and other sectors. These regulations in the new situation acted as the main barrier to progress and had to be abolished. In this way, in a common action, the deregulation policy was put on their agenda and gradually, after obtaining sufficient national legitimacy, it was enforced. Deregulation at that time, meant a response to the recognition that telecommunication, information and broadcasting sectors had come to occupy a central place in the capital accumulation process.

Deregulation, directly and indirectly, accelerated the process of privatisation. In return privatisation allowed more opportunities for total capital movement, and it especially made room for the progress of international mega companies and conglomerates. The result of the above mentioned processes was a greater commercialisation of both the telecommunication and broadcasting industries. Subsequently these industries were considered a highly profitable business and attracted more investment in comparison with other sectors of business. The accumulation of capital and profitability gave a greater impetus for international capital to develop these industries globally.

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3 According to Cate (1993: 665) "... in 1991, for example, Walt Disney replaced steel behemoth USX (formerly Andrew Carnegie's US steel, the nation's first billion dollar company) in the Dow Jones Industrial Average and oil giant Mobil corporation in Amex's Major Market Index. While domestic automotive, textile, and manufacturing industries fall victim to lower priced and often higher quality imports, the business of creating and delivering entertainment and information programming is second only to the sale of arms in its positive contribution the U.S. trade balance".

4 In all processes the media industry is considered as both means and end, because in addition to the profitability of this industry, it could serve global business as a whole. The new mode of production is increasingly based on consumption (production development, marketing and advertising) and the media are essential to this mode in their function of promoting consumerism.
The global development of the above noted industries needed some preconditions, such as those that had been exercised in industrial countries beforehand. To further this aim, both supportive levers [the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)] and pressure levers of the "North" became active. For example, around 1990, bank loans for telecommunications were projected to approach £500 million a year (cited in Sussman, 1991) whereas, according to Mohammadi (1997) around US $2 billion of the World Bank investment in Asia, Africa and Latin America currently goes to telecommunications projects annually. This is to persuade the governments of the "South" countries to follow the same path, amongst which the deregulation of telecommunications networks and broadcasting is taking place in order to integrate the ‘South’ countries into the “North” market expansion.

In this way globalisation of the economy and communication and their related processes have brought many changes within the media sphere, thus creating a new media environment. These developments, detailed below, can also be taken into consideration as the indicators of a new media environment.

° By launching more powerful satellites the internationalisation of broadcasting has become possible as CNN, BBC world service, Zee and SKY TV and other channels show. This development is changing the definition of broadcasting, e.g. the political and geographical bases of such a definition are shifting to other factors like language, socio-economic status, ethnicity, lifestyle, interest and hobbies. This development has also connected societies, groups and individuals all over the globe irrespective of time and space.

° International broadcasting monopolies are forming at the expense of national monopolies. This is to say that, the new communication technologies and internationalisation of broadcasting have reduced the role of governments, whether in the policy-making stage or in performance. Instead, as time goes by, the monopolistic role of privately run international broadcasters such as CNN, SKY and Star TV increases.
Broadcasting has become an independent industry and also a business. Therefore political and socio-cultural values would no longer be their only motivation (Cuilenburg & Slaa, 1993). According to Dyson and Humphreys (1988: 4) "this new industrial market was expected to be enormous: about 2,000 million ECU between 1986 and 1989 for satellites, launch rockets and ground stations; about 10,000 million ECU between 1986 and 1991/93 for aerials, decoders and other equipment for receiving direct television broadcasts; as well as huge markets for 'broadband' cable, advanced digital switching equipment and terminal equipment.

National broadcasting policy is now too tight a model for directing electronic media in the new environment. This issue has been raised by many scholars including McQuail (1994a) who notes that the media not only proliferate, but are also rapidly becoming more transnational in ownership, financing, organisation, production, distribution, content, and even regulation. These factors make it more difficult for a society to choose and implement a media policy of its own. However, according to Negrine & Papathanassopoulos (1991), although states have lost much control over their cultural affairs, they can still play a significant part in adapting international forces and pressure on domestic needs and requirements.

To pave the way for the movement of capital in the whole domain of communication, including broadcasting, the process of broadcasting deregulation is being exercised globally.

Deregulation of broadcasting has placed the concept of public service broadcasting in question. This, by itself, made way for the emergence of private channels (e.g. Italy).

The private channels have adopted a commercial policy. Advertisements and light programmes are substituted for quality programmes.

To capture more specific audiences, the process of audience segmentation has begun. The result is a prevalence of narrow casting instead of broadcasting. The thematic channel has been formed.
The innovation of new media outlets, with their different and compatible functions on one hand, and on the other hand, the increase in the number of channels and programmes, has given birth to a new concept i.e. choice and diversification. As a result audiences can receive appropriate programmes / information of their own choice and via their preferred medium.

To reach their own choice of programme, audiences have to have available different outlets such as radios, tape recorders, VCRs, computers, video-games, etc. The gradual collection of these outlets, in turn, has given rise to the concept of home-based entertainment.

Convergence between different communication outlets has mixed the traditional boundaries of these outlets. Telephone companies can offer a wide range of TV programme as can TV stations offer different telephone, facsimile and telex services. This also questions the conventional boundaries of telecommunication and mass communication as well as their related areas of policy-making.

Here, the point is that since the 1990s, apart from socio-cultural effects, these developments have begun travelling from the “North” to the “South” to influence other contexts, raising new questions regarding broadcasting systems, as well as related policies. Through such developments, the global mainstream challenges local cultural and communication policies. However, both the global mainstream's attempts at these measures and the local reactions to maintain their national and cultural identity are complicated. The paradox for the “South” is that tolerance to the new developments, which are mostly manifested by satellite broadcasting (at least in the short term), can cause as much trouble as attempts to prevent it. The impact of such a situation has led to an extensive spectrum of media policies, particularly DBS policies mostly in the Middle East, due to Islamic norms and values, and in Asian countries, because of the traditional structure of the societies. The countries that are situated in the footprints of DBS, at one extreme have adopted a completely open policy, e.g. Turkey and Egypt, whereas, at the other extreme, a pure closed approach has been adopted in Iran and

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5 On this see, e.g. Man Chan (1994) & Karthigesu (1994).
Saudi Arabia. What all these policies have in common, whether open, closed or even "in-between", is that all were derived out of necessity. The continued changes of these policies and the move from one extreme to another, clearly shows the dilemmas that these countries faced. Some outstanding examples of these policy changes in the Middle East and north Africa can be found in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Iran, Sudan and Tunisia. For example, at the beginning of the internationalisation of broadcasting, the Saudi Arabian government unofficially adopted an open air policy, but soon after moved to the opposite position.\footnote{"S-Arabia regulates reception of satellite", Broadcast UPI, 11 March 1994. Cited in Keyhan Intl., Vol. XIV, 3820, 12 March 1994.} The same happened in Sudan (Jomhouri-ye Islami, Dec. 31, 94). In contrast, Tunisia which had adopted a closed air policy, switched to the non-restricted policy. The Tunisian parliament on 18th July 1995 cancelled its December 1994 decision which prohibited the use of satellite antenna. According to Habib Amer, the Tunisian communications minister, the reason for this decision was to respect citizens’ rights to use satellite dishes. However, they initiated a license fee based on the size of dishes (Rasaneh, Fall 1995, Vol. 6, no. 3: 122).

The developments which happened in Iran after the popularisation of satellite picture reception demonstrates the power of the new media environment and the complexity of media policy within the globalisation of communication. This is especially true when the "local" became sharply divided, mainly based on class interests reacting to the globalisation of communication. This is an important point, particularly when cultural and media researchers categorically focus attention on the reactions of the exposed countries without addressing the influence of social class divisions sufficiently. Ironically what happened in reaction to the satellite broadcasting in Iran was a great deal of class conflict, which resulted in different stands being taken.

To be brief, one might say, as in many "South" countries, two main poles of capitalism have shaped the political structure of Iran; the modernist pole and the traditional pole. The modernist pole, which began to be reconstructed in the aftermath of the revolution, is at the present time represented by the middle class and industrial capitalism, whereas the other pole is represented by the bazaar businessmen and the
“urban poor”. As the modern pole has a tendency towards rejoining the global developments, the traditional pole fears such developments due to its competitive advantage in organising the economy in a traditional way. The position of each pole in facing every new development is rooted in their above mentioned character, as is their approach towards DBS.

This socio-political make-up made DBS a political issue and led to a great deal of discourse between people (mainly urban, traditional petite bourgeoisie and middle class), statesmen and religious authorities. Discourse about DBS among the state authorities formed around three groups. The first one, known as the modest faction, crystallised around Hashemi Rafsanjani's administration. The second one is known as the traditional faction and is the coalition of commercial bourgeoisie and 'urban poor' which still forms the majority in Majles. Finally, the high ranking clergy was the third group that backed the traditional faction in the process.

The first faction was very promising in tolerating foreign satellite channels. They actually preferred to leave the issue to people to find a solution on their own. However, they were faced with several barriers. The most important one was the lack of religious and political legitimacy of DBS due to its Western oriented programmes. In the present Iranian society, the official acceptance of any new plan or any new phenomena as a whole depends on having enough religious and political legitimacy. To defend satellite programmes at the first stage, one should demonstrate that the programmes do not contradict the “sublime teaching of Islam” (religious legitimacy) and in the next stage it should prove that they do not disturb the political system (political legitimacy). Also, in a religio-political sense, they should demonstrate that programme broadcasting inside the country do not cause any harm to society.

In contrast to the first group, the traditionalist faction took advantage of the incompatibility of some DBS programmes with the Islamic criteria and dismissed the idea of utilising satellite programmes. To the extent that the issues of interplay between satellite programmes and religion are taken into account, defending those programmes

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1Parliament, in Persian Majles-e Shora-ye Isalmi [Islamic Consultative Assembly (ICA)] well known as Majles.
was very difficult. Only exceptional programmes, such as some male sports without showing the fans, or academic presentations, could gain the above mentioned legitimacy. Therefore the lack of legitimate programmes boosted the position of traditionalists. However this camp had their own problems. The weakness of domestic radio and television and the whole entertainment apparatus bored the people. Since two main cultural institutions, i.e. the radio and television and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (MCIG), were controlled by this camp, they could not blame anybody else. In addition, defending their position, considering the advance of communication technologies and globalisation of communication, was very difficult. In any case, to overcome the situation they chose to rely on religion and politics. To strengthen their position religiously, they convinced the high ranking clergy to issue a Fatwa (edict, opinion issued by a religious authority) against utilising foreign satellite programmes. Politically they emphasised the dangers of DBS for the political system and persuaded the Majles to enact a ban on satellite reception equipment which will be described in detail in the thesis.

This study is searching for the consequences of the new media developments, particularly by DBS, on Iranian broadcasting policy. To examine this, firstly we need to know what messages new global developments, including globalisation of communication, have for the IRI's cultural and media policy? What policy issues have emerged with the DBS for Iranian society and Iranian media policy? How has the IRI responded to these issues? What theoretical and practical factors have effected the understanding and responses of the IRI in the new media environment? Also regarding the IRI responses, in the next stage it would be relevant to ask: what has been the central logic of the adopted policy? Who have been the main actors? What have been their motivations? In addition, since policy-related research entails the evaluation of actual policies we have to know what issues have emerged as a result of the IRI's DBS policy. Having explained these, I now move on to introduce the characteristics of the thesis chapters.
Chapter II, Theoretical Background, provides a foundation for the entire study plan. This chapter presents two sets of theories useful for analysing media policy issues. The first set, namely the theory of media, as a sort of middle range theory, borrowed from McQuail (1985), explains different policy options. The second set consists of "World System Theory" and the theory of "Globalisation" as macro theories, helping to analyse new policy perspectives and measures in the global context.

Chapter III, Methodology, also provides a foundation for the entire study plan. This chapter presents why qualitative method and case study design have been used for this study. In addition, the main sources of data and information that have been gathered for this study, as well as the methods of data collection and the concomitant difficulties, are discussed.

Chapter IV, A Brief History of Broadcasting Policy in Iran, looks back at the Iranian broadcasting policies since the establishment of radio and television. However, to familiarise the reader with the other domains of Iranian media policy, press policies from their beginnings will also be briefly examined. This chapter is divided into two parts; while the first part concentrates on the pre-Revolutionary era; the second part focuses on the Post-revolutionary period.

Chapter V, The Introduction and Penetration of DBS in Iran: Satellite Discourses, provides a chronological account of penetration of satellite dishes into Iran. It also contains people, state, government as well as clerical discourse about satellite.

In Chapter VI, The Impacts of DBS for the Iranian Media Sphere, the implications of DBS for the Iranian broadcasting system and media policies are discussed. It is this chapter that focuses on changing the media sphere in Iran.

Chapter VII, "Conclusion," contains a general discussion of the findings about DBS policy in Iran. It also suggests directions for further research to refine the understanding of the mechanisms of the new global communication.
Chapter II

Theoretical Background

This chapter is an overview of the major theoretical perspectives used to study media policy. In doing so, I focus on two types of theories, that is, the theories of media and the theories of globalisation. A cursory review of policy-related theories of media shows that although they could help differentiate between different policy options and fix them into various patterns, nevertheless, they are not capable of dealing with the new global issues surrounding media policy. To bridge this gap, here, in addition to adopting these theories, based on McQuail (1985), the study went further and incorporated several pointers of the world system theory and the theories of globalisation, while trying to deal with the above noted issues. To put it differently, where the first groups of theories could differentiate between the main structure of an adopted policy and normative patterns of media policies, social theories are more capable of telling us about a situation that under globalisation leads policy makers towards particular policy choices. A relevant example for this argument, as we will see in the following pages, is the IRI DBS policy in which its normative dimensions could be typified according to McQuail’s policy-related media theories. However, these theories are insufficient to address the global pressures which forced the IRI policy-makers to turn towards some particular options and not others. Thus, as said earlier, for the purpose of this level of analysis, this study is based on theories of world system and globalisation as they have been developed by, for example, Wallerstein (1974a; 1979;...); Robertson (1987a, 1990; 1992a); Luhmann (1971; 1982; 1984a; 1990b); Giddens (1990); Beyer (1994); and others. The aim is to find out how globalisation as a whole, and globalisation of communication particularly, brings to the surface different interests and the ways in which they challenge each other as well as to mark how these challenges are translated into the media policy choices. However, concerning the limit of this chapter on one side, and the weight of globalisation theory on the other, I must be satisfied with some selective key concepts of globalisation discourses, mainly
inherited from the modernisation and post-modernism sociological debates such as ‘inclusion’ versus ‘exclusivity’ concepts, in Parsons (1971) and Luhmann’s (1984a) discussion; ‘relativisation’ versus ‘revitalisation’, in Robertson and Chirico’s debates (1985), Beyer (1994); ‘particularisation’ versus ‘universalisation’; elaborated by Robertson (1992a) and Beyer (1994); ‘stratified differentiation’ versus ‘functional differentiation’, aggregated by Luhmann, (1982). All these concepts within the framework of sociology of change in one way or another are instructive to address the above noted tasks and the complexities of policy-making in the new era with reference to IRI DBS policy.

Before proceeding into the heart of the matter, I would like to make several notes about the very concept of policy and policy research; the difference between policy and regulation; the existing situation of media policy research and the theories of media policy.

By way of defining media policy I begin with Ploman (1979: 28). As he argues “[i]n one perspective, media and communications policy concern decisions about the allocation of resources, which are eminently political and not only technical decisions”. In the same manner Pristua (1993: 165) describes public policy as “whatever government choose to do or not to do”, as he argues this general definition can be appropriately applied to the formulation of communication policy. However, given the fact that these sorts of definitions in a conventional way assume an absolute role for decision making entities, they could hardly be compatible with the new communication environment. The argument is that the abundance of communication technologies (resources) and the internationalisation of broadcasting together, paved the way for emergence of new interest groups at both the national and the international level who are asking to be included in any decision regarding communication systems. The emergence of private initiatives in the broadcasting realm and the commercialisation of this domain is accelerating this trend. In addition due to technological and economic developments, the media and the telecommunications sectors are becoming increasingly convergent, which has important implications for media policy. It is no longer possible
to sustain the regulatory and policy separation between media and telecommunications. Government media policy can no longer be arbitrarily guided by cultural values, and telecommunications policy should also pursue objectives outside the technological and economic field.

To be realistic, any perspective towards communications policy, in one way or another, should consider the fact that, at the present time, no single organisation, government or society could design a communications policy based only on its own interests. Accordingly scholars such as Siune et al. (1986: 15) suggest what they describe as a more acceptable definition of policy-making than the conventional notion of policy-making. They define "policy making ... as [a] reaction to a challenge, a reaction that is intended to find a reasonable balance between 'forces of change' and 'forces of preservation'". What is worth mentioning is the move of policy in recent time beyond the conventional notion of "policing", that is, dealing with allocating, adjusting and facilitating or promoting, rather than working as an instrument of control. As McQuail (1994b: 50), emphasises "[i]t can also operate as a monitor of trends and changes and a source of useful information in conditions of uncertainty".

Also, since the two concepts of 'policy' and 'regulation' are often overlapping and the relation between them vague, even to some extent confusing, initially it would be better to differentiate 'policy' from 'regulation'. LeDue (1980: 197) in dealing with communication policy research, clearly differentiates between 'policy' and 'Regulation'. As he argues "in its most basic sense, regulation is that form of government that compels those entities over which it has legal jurisdiction to act or refrain from acting in the manner in which they would otherwise tend to act. 'Policy' represents one particularised aspect of such regulation". In his clarification, LeDue, emphasises that "while 'regulation' is essentially restrictive, simply reducing the operational options available, a 'policy' orients this broad general power of control toward the achievement of one specific societal objective" (Ibid.: 198). In this sense, 'policy' can be distinguished quite clearly from routine regulation, because it is not a
single, somewhat instinctive response to a particular problem, but a long term and continual process of legal guidance towards a clearly defined communications goal.

In addition, dealing with the division between what is known in communications literature as 'policy research' and 'theoretical research' is quite instructive for the purpose of this chapter. According to some scholars such as Coleman (1972) and Pristua (1993), one should differentiate between policy research and theoretical research. As they argue, policy research, in a very broad sense, deals with the impacts of current and past public policies, predicting the impacts of future policies and includes the very policy process. Pristua (1993) puts policy analysis as the focal point of policy research, which provides an opportunity to become directly involved in the communications policy process. In contrast theoretical research as a whole, as described by Coleman (1972), is a methodology that has as its philosophic base the testing and development of theories. By differentiating policy research from theoretical research Pristua (1993) concludes that policy analysis goes beyond the traditional academic tendency to observe, study and comment on phenomena without directly affecting them. In his distinction “theoretical research [is] predominantly deductive. A general theory is formulated from which specific hypothesis are derived and tested.... In policy research, the logic is often indicative. A specific problem or question is raised, leading to a broader, more general approach to the issue” (Ibid.: 166). According to Pristua, policy research and theoretical research also differ from each other based on simplicity and complexity as well as preservation. Theoretical research attempts to account for all factors and explain as much variance as possible, whereas the concern of policy research is the opposite. It seeks to establish what impact of a particular policy is, was, or will be. In short, the major difference between the two is intent. “Scholarly research seeks to build a theory; policy research seeks to answer specific questions” Pristua (Ibid.).

As a way of distinguishing between a methodology that has as its philosophical base, the testing and development of theories, and a methodology that has as its philosophical base a guide to action, Coleman (1972: 2) emphasises that "this is not to
say that the methods developed as an aid in theory construction cannot be used as components of a methodology that constitutes a guide to action. It is rather to say that at the most fundamental philosophical level a difference exists: the goal is not to further develop theory about an area of activity but to provide an information basis for social action”. However, since the issue of media policy became visible and went on the agenda in many countries around the mid 1980s, mainly because of media abundance, most of the attention of the scholars focused on “policy research” rather than driving policy and theoretical research simultaneously ahead. As a result in the current situation, attention to theorising is far behind the so-called “policy research”. Therefore the lack of theoretical studies and theoretical support for delivering inquiries has already affected this field.

This argument brings us to the point that calls for a sort of adjustment between these two trends and to give a brief account of the concern of media policy research at the present time. Actually once the new media technologies and socio-economic developments began to influence the media system, since late 1970s and early 1980s, communications literature was overloaded with new questions and issues regarding different dimensions of communications policy. Since then the main concern of media researchers and scholars has been largely in dealing with these matters. Although it is difficult to provide a comprehensive list of these issues and questions, for the sake of an initial understanding, the most fundamental ones below are indicated. The key questions include whether the potential of new media should be actively encouraged or not? What should be the balance between private and public investment? Whether to promote diversity or allow forms of monopoly? Whether to regulate or deregulate? If regulation, whether to attend to content or only to technology and distribution? The whole will be influenced by whether there reigns a cultural or industrial policy approach, as will be discussed later.

Dominance of “policy research” and these sorts of questions, directed research towards a substantial amount of fragmented research on a variety of policy issues, but principally the following:
• re-thinking the democratic function of the media in the rise of a market-oriented media in the works of Humphreys (1996); McQuail (1994a); Keane (1991)...

• concentrating on economical and technological convergence between broadcasting and the formerly segregated policy field of telecommunications and their implications for policy. Cuilenburg & Slaa (1993); Melody (1990); Ogan (1989)...

• inquiry into and aggregation of the stances and approaches of different political systems in facing matters such as the introduction of VCRs, cable and satellite, Humphreys (1996); Man Chan (1994); Karthigesu (1994); Siune and McQuail (1986); Seymour-Ure (1987); Garnham (1985); Burgelman and Pauwels (1992); Collins (1990, 1994b; 1996); Fearn (1993); Sahin and Aksoy (1993); Sparks and Reading (1994)...

• debate over the internationalisation and commercialisation of broadcasting, globalisation of mass media ownership and their implications for media systems, more specifically for public broadcasting, as well as raising questions about the ability of national governments to keep their sovereignty over domestic broadcasting media. McQuail (1994a); Negrine and Paphthenassopoulos (1991); Reddi (1987); Hirsch (1992)...

• writing on general principles of media policy and policy making, Cate (1993); Krasnow and others (1994); Motta (1984); LeDue (1980)...

• writing on different aspects of media policy research, McQuail (1990, 1994b); Lund (1988); Pristua (1993); Mowlana (1994)...

• efforts to build a theoretical framework for analysing policy alternatives. Thompson (1994 a); Siune, Sorbets and Rolland (1986); McQuail (1985); Mosco (1988)...

• writing on international law, regulation and policies regarding outer space issues and satellite communications, Smith (1990); Gorove (1991); Taishoff (1987); Fisher (1990)...

Surprisingly this number of case studies has not yet produced many models of media policy. How can this insufficiency be accounted for? One may point to the fact
that even the present amount of case studies are not sufficient to build policy models. A review of the above studies shows that they have mainly been conducted since the mid 1980s, with the majority in the 1990s. Therefore, dealing with policy issues is a new trend. On the other hand, one should not undermine the so-called division between 'policy research' and 'theoretical research' as a restraining factor of promotion of media policy models. Above all, despite the visibility of media policy and media research at the present time, the subject of discourse of media policy in mass communications literature still faces various difficulties. Dealing with the root of these problems, McQuail (1994b: 39), argues "on the one hand, there are claims to professional autonomy on the part of communicators, which lead to rejection both of research and of policy. On the other hand, the precepts of liberal communication philosophy offer little support for media policy of any kind and can be cited to devalue critical research and delegitimate policy". Also it should not be forgotten that still there are some difficulties with the whole concept of policy-making, since, until now, it rarely developed beyond a series of regulations which were designed to control ownership, content and distribution. That means the recent notion of policy-making has not yet been established and regulatory policy is still preferred to policy-making. As a result, there is not a strong background of media policy-making, and an abundance of policy models to enrich media policy knowledge particularly in the form of theorising. However, the new communication environment obliged the state authorities to actively become involved in policy matters and consider the need for long term planning by moving beyond some rigid regulations. This is particularly stimulated by the new climate in which the new media developments have been compounded by a decrease in national autonomy over media systems and creeping internationalisation in many aspects of media operation. Representing these efforts are a variety of policy options recently experienced in different countries. Man Chan (1994) recognised four policy types in Asia based on access: (a) virtual suppression, (e.g. Singapore and Malaysia); (b) regulated openness, (Hong Kong and the Philippines); (c) illegal openness, (e.g. Taiwan and India); and (d) suppressive openness, as represented by the People's
Republic of China. In the same manner Karthigesu (1994) maintains two main types of policy in most of the Asian countries, one is the liberalisation trend of the Indian subcontinent countries and the commercialisation trend for South Asian countries.

This description brings us to the point of respectively presenting the two groups of theories which are noted above. My justification for approaching the topic in this way is that it offers certain strategic advantages within the context of the present study as each group of theories compensates for the inadequacy of others.

An Overview of Policy-Related Media Theories

Denis McQuail in his theoretical work, particularly his (1985) article titled "Conflicts of Theory and Issues of New Information Media Policy", tries to summarise and examine the relationship between media theory and policy-making by drawing on the relevant aspects of growth and change in regards to the media. In this way he is careful in making the distinction, as he explains, "theory is a reflection of and on the activities of the media, and policy is a reaction to, or anticipation of, what the media do or might do." (p:41) The main focus is the degree to which theoretical choices mirror policy options, and the possibilities of how media theory can contribute to effective policy-making.

McQuail's task is to explore this relationship, and to reach general conclusions on the extent and nature of correspondence between alternative theoretical positions, coupled with available policy options. In doing so, he attempts to extend his analysis beyond a straightforward outline of the clashes between different scholars, by profiling the differences that set the various leading characters apart. Such fundamental theoretical clashes, for example, have revealed themselves in communications theory in such debates as: the clashes between Gerbner's (1976) school of Cultivation Analysis and its critics (e.g. Hirsch 1980; Hughes 1980); the debates over the validity and usefulness of the tradition known as "uses and gratification" research (e.g. Elliott 1974; Carey and Kreiling 1974); the reassessments of the significance of personal influence and opinion-leader theory (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Gitlin 1978); the question of
whether or not international media flow is free and balanced and whether it ought to be so (Boyd-Barret 1982); the broad struggle between proponents of Marxist or critical theory and those who have come to be labelled as “Pluralists” (Bennett 1982); the debate about whether or not news reflects social reality and whether it sets or responds to the agenda of public or politics (Glasgow Media Group 1980; Becker 1982).

Such a list is endless and yet it is imperative to identify the underlying structure of the disagreements, which is related to “broader matters of philosophy, ideology, and world view, given the sensitive position usually occupied by mass media in relation to politics and public morality” (McQuail, 1985:42). To achieve this, McQuail discusses four central themes in line with the chief alternative possibilities, and these are in turn related to each other.

**Media or Society as Mover?**

The first area of contention concerns the *media-centred* and *society-centred* approaches, where the former underscores the media as a force for change, either by means of technology or through typical content carried, the latter highlighting the dependence of the media on other forces in society, namely the power structure and the pattern of social and class stratification (Golding and Murdock, 1978). This is a fundamental issue since many of the answers concerning the relationship between mass communication and social change are dependent on it (Rosengren 1980).

The *society-centred* perspective emphasises the belief that media are the outcome of historical change in terms of being a reflection and by-product of political liberation, industrialisation, secularisation, and as a means of servicing the requirements of other social institutions. The *media-centred* view, on the other hand, stresses that the dominant forms of communication technology act as an independent causal factor in social change. (McLuhan 1964). Such theorists have claimed that forms of public communication engender historical change, and this is witnessed by the rise of liberalism, political freedom, individualism, nationalism and the decline of ideology.

The *society-centred* approach has been the preserve of sociologists and political scientists, who are committed to a belief in fundamental social and political forces of a
structural kind as prime movers. The forms and techniques of mass media are regarded as occupying some position within the superstructure, essentially as aspects of culture which owe their origin to more fundamental changes. The contrast between society and media as causal factors can be further improved as a classification by a simple internal subdivision. With society, we can demarcate separate potential influences that are structural from those that are individual social and psychological differences. On the media side, it is possible to separate those theories which emphasise technology and the nature of the medium, as distinct from those which have more to do with content of a medium or media.

"Social structural" theory thus, focuses on the objective determinants of the context, and in this way power is conferred on the power and class structure of society, to economic influences on the structure of the media, and on the behaviour of audiences. The individual differences perspective targets the chosen motives and expectations of an audience, relating to issues such as prior knowledge and interests which affect behaviour, to the process of selective attention, perception and interpretation and to the chances for individuals to resist or avoid influence.

The fundamental differences between technology-determination and message-determination lies between the more materialist and idealist concepts of change and influence, and also with a more deterministic or voluntarist conception of the process at work. The Medium/technology version emphasises the compelling and directing effect of a dominant technology on both the message and a given communication system. It also exerts pressure on the receiver to adapt, based on lines instructed by the communications system. McLuhanism is an example of this view; when the 'Medium as a content theory' recognises, to some extent, that technology influences content, although content itself is only one of the many factors. Gerbner's (1976) cultivation theory serves as an example here, since the meaning of the message owes more to the cultural and institutional context of those who produce.

Thus, media-centred theories emphasise powerful media, contrary to the belief that the media derive their power from society, an inference which underlines society-
oriented theories. According to the latter, the effects from the media are then unlikely to be large, random or uncontrollable. Although media-centred theories do not necessarily involve large, direct effects on individuals, they do assume important, long-term institutional effects, either causing or preventing change. Therefore it follows that the four variants have different research implications, stressing either the structure of society, the audience, the medium, or the message system.

**Dominance Versus Pluralism**

According to McQuail, this division separates media pluralists from those who see the media as a significant instrument of dominance in a class divided society (Bennett 1982). The second view has been presented in the work of classical Marxism, alongside mass society theory, the work of the Frankfurt School, in current political economic media theory (Murdock and Golding, 1977), as well as ‘new left’ or ‘critical’ media theory. The pluralists point to the diversity and fragmentation of media structures in liberal society, including the range of choices in message and ideology, offering the audiences a multiplicity of news, as well as the invaluable opportunity to answer back.

Dominance theories converge on the point that mass media, either directly or indirectly, serve the interests of a dominant or ruling elite, who use their influence to shape the consciousness of the majority, thereby ideologically suppressing potential class opposition. This enables a certain definition of the world to be relentlessly portrayed, with the standardisation of content and homogenisation of audience taste, contrasting significantly with the pluralistic view.

Both sets of views are further distinguished by sets of political values, with the advocacy of liberalism for its own sake, contrasting with the questioning of whether liberal forms lead to democratic outcomes, and instead championing elements of collectivism, popular control and limitations on private ownership. Similarly, they hold opposing views on the effects of the media, with the pluralists drawing attention to the unpredictability and diversity of effects, compared to the interests of elite, which dominance theories stress. In summary, although the generality of such a division
reduces its value, it goes beyond a simple distinction between 'left' and 'right' or 'consensus' and 'conflict' approaches to the media.

**Centrifugal Versus Centripetal Effect**

A third dimension of media variation, as McQuail (1985) summarised, differentiates between stance on media as contributing to change, fragmentation, diversity and mobility, from that of a unifying, stabilising, integrating and homogenising force. He labels the first as 'centrifugal', where the mass media have historically brought messages of what is new, fashionable and advanced in terms of goods, ideas, technologies and values, which challenge the established system. The 'centripetal' approach reinforces conformity by replacing diverse and long-established value systems with new and homogenous sets of values, which work as a binding influence, as in older mechanisms such as religion or the family.

However, some theoreticians (e.g., McCormack, 1961) argue that it is not inconsistent to regard both such forces at work, with one compensating to some extent for the other. It is useful though to regard them as distinct, so as to avoid confusion, and to encourage four theoretical positions. The centripetal position shows a positive view of the media as an integrative and unifying force (the functionalist view), and a negative version, which sees this effect as homogenising and manipulative control (mass society theory). The centrifugal dimension also has a positive view, which pinpoints modernisation, freedom and mobility as effects from the media (individualism), as well as drawbacks of isolation, alienation, loss of values, and vulnerability (i.e. a dysfunctional view of change as social disorder).

**Cultural Versus Scientific Theory**

A final distinction, which has more to do with conception and method than with the substance of what media are, is the difference between culturalistic or humanistic and scientistic approaches. This encompasses the differences between subjective and objective methods, between attention to content and attention to system.

In regards to communication, McQuail refers to Carey's (1975) contrast between 'ritual' and 'transmission' models of communication. According to Carey "a ritual
view of communication is not directed towards the extension of messages in space, but the maintenance of society in time, not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs”. The transmission view on the other hand, which is associated with industrial cultures, has as its centre the “transmission of signals or messages over distances for purposes of control”. The distinction can be better understood by its implications for the study of media news. While the transmission perspective of news stresses objectivity, facility, speed and effectiveness, the ritual view, as Carey illustrates, holds that “news is not information, but drama; it does not describe the world, but portrays an area of dramatic forces and action”. The ritual approach then binds together with meaning rather than effect, with interpretation rather than measurement, with the expressive forms and function of communication rather than the factual and informative, to interactive rather than one-way communication relations, to open rather than closed systems, to a view of communication as ends rather than means.

**An Integrating Framework**

Thus, McQuail has distinguished four theoretical distinctions and their divisions, where several strands of normative judgement are involved. Before investigating their media policy implications, he attempts to ‘fix’ them in relation to each other, in order to make the differences and overlaps more understandable. As McQuail stresses, this idea has been borrowed from Rosengren who adopted a scheme developed by two sociologists of organisations who mapped out various schools of sociology relevant to their work. Burrell and Morgan (1979) diagrammatically illustrated two master dimensions of sociology, with the vertical axis progressing from “the sociology of radical change” to “the sociology of regulation” while the horizontal axis polarised “subjective” and “objective” theory and research. Rosengren (1980) himself adopted such a method for the purpose of comparing and assessing traditions of research in mass communication.

Such a figure which was drawn by McQuail (1985: 50) (figure 1) approximately mirrors the same two dimensions, with the vertical axis representing the choice between
a dominance view (left, critical, committed to radical change) and pluralist view (optimistic, somewhat functionalist, liberal, reformist) of mass media systems. The horizontal dimension reflects the cultural science distinction (ritual versus transmission view). Within the four cells so identified, we can locate the other positions which have been named: two alternative versions of society-determined and of media-determined perspectives and two versions of both the centrifugal and the centripetal views, giving each a positive and a negative form of expression.

**Figure 1**

**Varieties of Media and Social Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURE (subjective)</th>
<th>SCIENCE (objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ix centrifugal (-) (fragmentation)</td>
<td>IIIx centripetal (-) (manipulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIx medium (message) determination</td>
<td>Ivx social-structural determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIIIx social (individual) determination</td>
<td>Vx medium (technology) determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIIx centrifugal (+)</td>
<td>VIx centripetal (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues of Policy in Relation to New Media**

McQuail then approaches the topic from a European, rather than a North American perspective, by referring to widely varying national situations. Nevertheless, the context is broadly similar, both being characterised by a long tradition of media policy making. The technological possibilities engendered by the new media bear some similarity with the United States, and so the social consequences can at least be discussed in the same terms. The chief differences are in the greater degree of public and state intervention in decisions concerning media system and structures, as well as in the operation of media services. In the broadcasting media, technological innovation has had the most effect, raising immediate questions for the policy makers. Where
media systems are largely commercial, public policy is usually only confronted with the need to deal at a later stage with the consequences of innovation.

**Distribution**

At this juncture McQuail examines some of the major policy issues, focusing on how innovations in cable, satellite, videotext and video, affect the distribution possibilities for all sorts of electronic messages. It is difficult to estimate the implication of these developments for existing media and for the expansion into new service areas because the level of demand is unclear. Yet, it is true that the new developments create greater audio-visual media in places of scarcity, as well as enlarging individual choice. In this way, the greater likelihood of differentiation and freedom, along with interactive possibilities that are not presently available in most mass media, become apparent.

The implications of this development for theory are huge, opening up a society which could be more free, changeable, and interactive, but which also risks individual isolation and social fragmentation. Such issues mean that governments are faced with the prior need to take decisions and make choices. There is a broad trade-off between encouraging media development, or stifling it. These considerations include: the interests of existing media, public as well as private; the possibilities for some financial gain from new hardware, software and distribution services; the interests of telecommunication production industries; the established cultural policies relating to media, the arts, and education; competing political views; technical standards; diplomatic and international commitments and consequences.

Such considerations can be broadly categorised according to whether they cohere with cultural or industrial policy. Cultural policy refers to those matters which cover social purpose, national culture, and political principles of freedom, equality and diversity. Industrial policy on the other hand deals with the economic consequences of media change, (McQuail, 1985:52). In most countries we can find traces of both. However, one usually predominates the other. Generally speaking, the more cultural the policy, the greater the tendency to prevent rapid change, while a more industrial policy in fact encourages change.
**Support**

This relates to the character of encouragement and the form or forms which are likely to be involved. In selecting the background of European television and radio, McQuail's argument is that the choice is between public initiative and private (commercial) enterprise. The balance of policy climate also plays a role, with cultural policy favouring public, while industrial leans towards private, development. The chief consideration between public or private initiative is the question of finance, and this gives rise to issues such as the cultural consequences of advertising and political feasibility of raising extra public funds.

**Diversity**

The third issue focuses on the protection of diversity, which has already arisen in the decision to encourage new media. This is in no way a new concern, but we must remember that the new media have opened up several possibilities for encouraging diversity, as they almost by definition, guard against monopoly and centralisation. In regards to private commercial exploitation of new media, similar issues arise with such matters as cross media ownership and the concentration of ownership. Thus, the chief concern centres on the means by which diversity can be achieved. The 'Private Enterprise' solution favours the market as the most effective mechanism for realising diversity, as the alternative is an artificial pluralism based on control or subsidy, which is designed to achieve equal representation in media according to region, political or social divisions, or language and ethnic origin.

**Control**

The degree and nature of control to be exercised in the interests of any of the principles which have been opted for at an earlier stage in the policy making process, raises further issues. Regulation makes indirect reference to the technical standards, to the setting of positive goals for media and the monitoring of performance, or to setting minimum cultural and moral standards applicable to the content which is transmitted. The issue thus is the balance of proscription over prescription, and the question of who
sets and polices whichever regulations are chosen. These choices are summarily presented in figure 2 (Ibid.: 54).

**Figure 2**

**The Nature and Sequence of New Media Policy Choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Media Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy climate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>First choice:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second choice:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third choice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monopoly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth choice:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deregulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth choice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unifying Theory and Policy Issues**

While it is difficult to visualise a close relationship between the policy options earlier outlined, and the several media theories mentioned in figure 1, a close inspection of the issues involved does reveal a web of connections. It must be pointed out that theory contains a number of pointers to policy, and by a similar token, policy options often imply a theoretical perspective. In this way, the connections can be explored from either the theory or policy vantage point. The former may indicate whether a theory is likely to lead to a consistent media policy, even though the theories are not exclusive guides to the reality of the connection between media and society.

McQuail begins with the two main dimensions of dominance vs pluralism and culture vs science. Dominance theory favours social cultural and political factors while expressing caution about rapid expansion. Pluralist theory views media expansion more favourably, with less fear of unpredictable consequences. Such a framework promotes a diversity of access in a structure that inhibits monopoly; a minimum of regulation. The culture-science dimension would see cultural theory involving cultural rather than industrial policy, and to be associated with regulation aimed at content, not
technical matters. Scientistic theory would promote the opposite, as the market would act as the test of, and stimulus for, effective development of new media. These models can lead us to more specific implications, mapped out by the two chief dimensions in figure 1.

The Pessimistic Version of Centrifugal Theory (I)

This view revolves around the idea that the mass media contribute to the fragmentation of society, the isolation of individuals, and loosening of social bonds (McQuail, 1985:55) Therefore, caution must be exercised in any expansion of new media on cultural and social grounds. A decentralised policy would be promoted providing regions and local communications with some say in their own media. Such a pattern should slow, or even reverse, the atomising tendencies of modern societies, through interactive and locally based communications. Limits would be set on the import of foreign content, since the preservation of a national culture guards against alienation and fragmentation.

The Medium-as-Message Deterministic Theory (II)

This theory involves cultural factors and insists on caution in encouraging new media, in advance of coherent plans for their use. Media development has occurred at times with no clear definition of purpose, and on the basis of technological development for its own sake. In order to avoid this, theorists or decision makers advocate public frameworks of exploitation in which content-relevant criteria of performance could be effectively applied. The objection to monopoly here centres on the dangers of uniformity of content and in this way is concerned with software, the range of services and kinds of content, the diversity of the professional groups of media producers and opportunities for access. As with theory position (I), there is justification for regulation of content in regards to the balance of functions to be fulfilled and the control of film or video material sold or rented. Because of these, this framework is gradualist, protectionist and paternalist.
The Pessimistic Version of Centripetal Theory (III)

This is a critical version of media theory in that it emphasises the potential manipulative control by monopolistic media operating in the interests of an elite. There is more than one perspective on the question of encouraging new media as they may be able to weaken the concentration of media productive power by encouraging diverse, even deviant, media beyond the control of ruling interests. Conversely, this theory leads also to a more cynical view that developments would at sometime be controlled by the same interests that controlled the centralised broadcast media. Thus, the commercial exploitation of hardware will marginalise innovative and oppositional uses where they can have little impact. Also, the public guarantees against commercial monopoly may themselves lead to state control. In this way, the regulation necessary to secure social and political benefits from the new media works against the positive aspects of liberation they may engender.

The Society-Centred Media Dependence-Determination Theory (IV)

Such a theory stresses that media dependence and determination by the social structure is inadequate for policy-making. Regulation and interventionism are justified with the belief that society always comes first, and since media development must reflect the balance of social and political forces in society. This should therefore be open and explicit. This theory offers little guidance on whether to encourage the proliferation of new media. Development should occur within a framework of public control and with sufficient regulation to achieve goals set by society. With regards to monopoly, it is the structure rather than the content, and the economic aspects rather than the content, which is the focus. This theory then leads to a strategy for constructed, or planned diversity.

The Technology-as-Medium Determination Theory (V)

This version emphasises that the uninhibited development of new technology contributes to a more innovative, efficient and productive society. It is devoid of ideology and does not object to state-sponsored innovation on the grounds of industrial
policy of the kind observed in France. Private exploitation though, if it enabled media
growth as in the case of Britain, would be acceptable. The objection to monopoly from
this perspective is that it slows down change and stifles diversity.

The Positive Version of Centripetal Theory (VI)

The emphasis with this theory is on pluralism, continuity, order, and efficiency as
it considers the mass media as an integrating force in modern society. The positive
attributes of an achieved stability and consensus work for a gradual and conditional
extension of communication facilities, with industrial/commercial interests balanced by
attention to social-cultural implications, particularly the changes of privatisation and
social fragmentation. Thus, development ought to take place with respect for cultural
and social continuity and integration, and this makes regulation within a framework of
public provision more desirable than unrestricted commercial exploitation. New media
such as videotext and computer based networks would be favoured as they are seen to
contribute to the efficient working and co-ordination of society.

The Positive Version of Centrifugal Theory (VII)

This theory shares common ground with theory (V) as it views favourably the
widening of individual freedom of choice as a contribution to the change and diversity
of society. Pluralism and diversity are valued and it assumes no conspiratorial forces in
society perverting progress through the market. New media are encouraged on cultural,
more than industrial grounds, especially on the basis of market mechanisms, which are
sensitive to individual wants. There is little fear of monopoly, and decentralisation
would only be favoured if clear evidence of regional demand exists. Furthermore,
regulation would be minimised especially in terms of content.

The Individual-as-Determinant Theory (VIII)

This approach identifies individuals as having sufficient power to choose sensibly
and resist unwanted influence. As with other pluralistic theories, it favours innovation
according to demand. In this way, the market should guide and so there is strict
opposition to paternalistic regulation, both structurally and in terms of content. New
media make available interaction and consultation and these are a valuable extension to
individual development and satisfaction. Cultural objectives are seen as the preserve of cultural policy which can directly influence individuals and groups, rather than policies of controlling media content or structures of provision. Thus, the given cultural and communication resources are a result of the supply of content and the capacity of receivers to choose wisely. Intervention would point to the receiver rather than the transmitter which contrasts with position IV (social structural determinism) which guides us to the supply side of content.

**Old and New Media; Old and New Theory**

McQuail concludes that further pursuit of the overlaps between different strands of media theory and policy would not be productive as it depends too heavily on the definition and locations of lines of division. McQuail does make the point that there is some connection between theory and policy. We have witnessed the normative elements contained in the many versions of media theory, and this serves as a reminder of the normative character underlying policy choices in the new media. We are also alerted to the tendency for current media theory to be rooted in certain outdated concepts of the nature of mass communication. We must not however conclude that the concerns underpinning the ‘old’ media are not equally applicable now. This retains importance, particularly with notions such as freedom, equality and the exercise of power in society. What is needed is to unite the formulation of theory and the expression of underlying viewpoints with the complex reality of modern media systems. This may also assist in the anticipation of future innovations. Theoreticians must focus carefully on both the positive and negative aspects of the unfolding media landscape. It is somewhat inevitable for theory to result from reactions to a given reality, and therefore be late in arriving, but it would also be useful if it could anticipate a range of media futures.

To conclude, each media system follows implicitly if not explicitly one of these pairs. As will be described in the next chapters, in the IRI media-centred view, as contrasted to the society-centred view, is the dominant approach. What makes this view distinct from the society-centred perspective is the passive role which the IRI, gives to the less important society and individuals compared to the media. As for the
distinction between the medium/technology version and message determination the IRI manifests the second approach. Here the religio-political authorities believe that media have the ability to cause good or harmful impacts, depending on the content and the intention of those who control these outlets. To put it differently, in this view media without their content and human agent is unimaginable, much less its consequences.

According to dominance versus pluralist division, IRI media policy demonstrates a typical example of dominance theory. However, a new trend towards a sort of ‘top to toe pluralism’ is emerging mainly through the press rather than broadcasting. In the choice between centrifugal and centripetal effects of media, the IRI’s stance seems to be based on centripetal effects in the sense of unifying, stabilising, integrating and homogenising. However, it contains manipulative control as well. The IRI position in terms of cultural or scientific theory is very vague, and so it is difficult to locate it in one of the ‘cultural’ or ‘scientific’ categories. This ambiguity apparently is the case in many countries. As McQuail (1985:52) puts it, “in nearly all countries, there are elements of both cultural and industrial policy, but often one predominates over the other and sets its mark on the scope and nature of media development”. Although there can be found some elements of both categories, the IRI policy is mainly cultural rather than scientific or industrial in the sense that it stresses societal issues such as religion and national culture. However, the IRI policy does not include some other components of cultural policy, such as principles of freedom, equality and diversity. The IRI policy illustrates industrial considerations only when matters such as diversification of TV channels and other physical developments are intended within internationalisation of broadcasting. Nevertheless, this policy is far from the industrial approach since it is not basically involved with the economic essence of new media change.

Grand Theories

World System Theory

We now turn to a more complex and integrative approach with a view to broadening the scope and bringing the global dimensions of media policy in the picture. A brief account of the most relevant features of the “world system” theory and the
theory of globalisation will help us through the discussion. It is worth mentioning that the world system theory might seem irrelevant for analysing DBS policy in Iran since the overall policy hardly considers the economical and industrial dimensions of the new media developments. Nevertheless this does not mean that these do not affect the direction and consequences of a given policy. The world system theory has several pointers to the “consumerism” which is one of the milestone factors of the IRI overall policy to be taken into account. World system theory takes the “world system” as its basic unit of analysis and examines the historical-social process in the formation of international capitalism. It is valuable to this study because of its holistic approach, stressing the whole as the first step in understanding the individual parts.

Wallerstein (1974a; 1980) has demonstrated that capitalism has been a “world system” since the 16th century. The system consists of a single expanding world-scale economy, a variety of states, the capital-labour relation, and the international division of labour. The theory holds that unequal development between the different regions of the world is a constituent part of the system’s division of labour, between core (or centre) and the periphery.

“Core” and “periphery”, are the two concepts central to the world systems theory. They refer to the two main types of social formations constituting the world economy. These also refer to the economic and political relations and hierarchies among the regions and states of the world. Wallerstein (1979) also introduces a third category, the “semi-periphery” which works as an agent between the core and periphery. Although questions have been raised about the pertinence of this third category (Chirot and Hall 1982), Wallerstein maintains that the tripartite division of labour among states sheds more light on the world economy.

The world systems theory maintain that there is a correspondence between the level of economic development and degree of political organisation: thus rich industrial states occupy core areas, and weak states are in peripheral areas. Further, the relationships between core and periphery, or between weak and strong states, are replicated in the international communications system.
The division of labour dictates that strong media production and consumption goes to core nations and a weak consumption/production role is assigned to periphery nations. This stratification is an outcome of the structure of the world system and the recent emergence of the media/communications industries as a key sector in the world economy (Mosco 1988). Within this hierarchy, the centre nations emerge as the main producers and consumers of the media products in the international market, while the periphery nations are primarily consumers, and therefore dependent on imports from the core nations for their media needs. The different roles in the international division of labour results in different levels of overall economic wealth, per capita income, and technological development between the core and the periphery. The production and consumption of media products mirrors these gaps.

While world system theory is able to explain economic and political relations between nations, such as the special manner of forming capitalism and class struggle in peripheral countries, the introduction of the very notion of forming a world system and the fact that economy is the most established feature of the modern world, it falls short of paying adequate attention to the cultural bases of conflicts over the communication/media products exchange. In the case of our study (IRI media policy) this theory is valuable since it stresses core/periphery conflicts over consumerism and the emergence of communication and information technologies which are themselves a key sector of the world economy. The new mode of production is increasingly based on consumption (production development, marketing and advertising) and the media are essential to this mode because they provoke consumerism. The cultural industries are vital to consumer capitalism, both at the level of production (in terms of style and design) and consumption (with a new emphasis on consumer taste and lifestyle). Media products are both international and national phenomena. When media programming is started between two nations, it is primarily as a commodity, but when the product reaches the point of consumption, it assumes ideological and cultural functions within the receiving society. This is a major part of the argument of societies and governments who oppose globalisation. In this way the IRI not only questions the
cultural implications of media products, but it also traces their economic dimensions, such as the imbalance in the export of media products, but with less concern compared with its cultural implications.

Where world system theory does not adequately analyse the cultural and ideological dimension of the new global order particularly in regard to communication issues, globalisation theory covers this issue extensively. This theory, in particular, looks at the integration of the entire world into one single system and underlines contradictory features which are present in the process of globalisation, such as the persistence of the nation states, multi-culturality and localism. Here, this theory could help to address, in part, the anxieties of the IRI authorities which lead them towards specific policy options. It is to this theory that I now turn in detail.

The Theories of Globalisation

Debate over globalisation or similar concepts can be traced to the early years of the social sciences. Among the classical theories was one by Saint Simon who noticed that industrialisation induced uniformity of practice throughout the cultures of Europe. He then argued for a utopian internationalism which could include a pan-European government and a new and universalising humanistic philosophy as a way of accelerating the process. These ideas were promoted through a publication presciently called The Globe (quoted in Waters 1995:5). Saint Simon’s ideas found their way through Comte, to Durkheim. Durkheim’s legacy to globalisation is his theories of differentiation and culture. He argued that due to the extent to which societies become structurally differentiated, commitment to such entities as the state must be weakened because they have a narrower compass. In parallel, the collective consciousness must progressively weaken and become more abstract in order to encompass inter-societal diversity. This implies that industrialisation tends to erode collective commitments and to facilitate the erosion of boundaries between societies (Waters 1995).

Just as Durkheim identified differentiation, Max Weber identified rationalisation as the globalising solvent. He was fundamentally concerned with the success of rationalisation, with its spread from its origins in Calvinistic Protestantism to touch all
Western culture. Rationalisation implies that all cultures will become characterised by: ‘the depersonalisation of social relationships, the refinement of techniques of calculation, the enhancement of the importance of specialised knowledge, and the extension of technically rational control over both national and social process’ (quoted from Brubaker 1984 in Waters 1995:5). Although Weber did not recognise it, this implies a homogenisation of cultures as well as a reduction of commitment to such values as patriotism and duty of which he was aware. Globalising effect, in Weber’s view, was restricted to Western Europe. Weber saw no prospect of the spread of rationalised cultural performances for those societies which he regarded as inevitably mired in religious traditionalism such as India and China.

Of all classical theorists, the one most explicitly committed to the globalisation theory of modernisation was Karl Marx. Globalisation tremendously increased the power of the capitalist class because it opened up new markets for it, boosted by the discovery of America and the opening of navigation routes to Asia. The bourgeoisie seized this opportunity as, “the need of a constantly expanding market for its products, chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish everywhere” (quoted in Waters 1995:6). But Marx argues that this development is cultural as well as economic, because it gives a cosmopolitan character to both production and consumption. This process is not just restricted to Western Europe. As Marx puts it “the bourgeoisie draws even ‘barbarian’ nations into its ‘civilisation’ using ‘heavy artillery of cheap commodities to batter down ‘all Chinese Walls’” (Ibid.). For Marx the bourgeoisie is creating the world in its own image. Nevertheless territorial boundaries remain. Marx refers to the interdependence of nations and recognises the continuing existence of the nation-state (Ibid.).

What sociologists such as Comte, Saint Simon, Durkheim and Marx were discussing was later to become the ‘globalisation discourse’. During the latter period of so-called classical sociology, the situation became particularly complex on the sociological front, mainly because of the hardening and expansion of the apparatus of nation-state and the strengthening of nationalism. Therefore the classical sociologists
were faced with the problem of the simultaneity of 'nationalisation' and 'globalisation'. Modern sociology was, in a way, born from such a paradox (Waters 1995).

However, the use of the noun 'globalisation' and much of the literature of social scientific expansion of globalisation as a theoretical and experimental theme are the creation of the late 1960s and onwards. According to Robertson (1990) the contemporary sociological analysis of 'the world' in its commonplace concept began in the late 1960s. This gave rise to efforts to modernise Third World societies within the context of the overall pattern of relations among all nations. Applying models which had previously been applied only to intra-societal structures to relations between societies was a novel idea in the early 1960s. Some of this work was connected to 'peace studies' particularly in the works of Johan Galtung (1966). Another connection was pursued in terms of the ways in which orientation to the processes of modernisation were positively or negatively established on the part of political elites in a fluidly conceived international system (Nettl and Robertson, 1966; Nettl and Robertson 1968). This decade also saw the emergence of other ideas such as the increasing necessity for a 'global sociology' (Moore, 1966), the study of war and peace in broadly sociological terms (Aron, 1966; Robertson 1968), and non-power dimensions of relations between national societies (Etzioni, 1965) and so on. Clearly, some specialists in international relations and other fields were moving in roughly the same direction. From the mid 1970s until late 1980 however, it was the dependency theory and world system theory that dominated and enriched the debates. These models usefully examined the globalisation of capitalism, the rise of transnational corporations and the related global division of labour and global movements of capitals (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996). Yet, this term was not much in use in academic circles until the mid 1980s. Since then this concept unprecedentedly prevailed in different parts of the world and found every day usage.

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8 For a brief chronological account of usage of the words 'globe' 'globalisation' and other derivatives of this word see: Waters (1995: 2).
The discussion of globalisation now covers diverse, even scattered topics. The most common include: the origin of “globalisation”, the origin of debating globalisation; the structure of the global system, the theme or themes of globalisation; anti-systemic forces within the global system, desires of the global system, and so on. But most attention is on the motives and dominant factors of globalisation, the role of anti-systemic movements and calls for the recasting of inherited theoretical conception from modernisation and post modernisation debates.

On the question of globalisation themes, earlier theorists posited various kinds of global linkages, primarily founded on a single-factor model. Among the unifactorial analyses, the derivatives of political-economy models such as dependency theory (Frank and Gills, 1993; Amin, 1974; 1993) and world system theory (Wallerstein, 1974a), put a global economy as the engine of global order. Although some of these theorists gradually moved towards multidimensional analysis of the world system through emphasising the role of culture and politics, e.g. Wallerstein (1990), these factors were subsumed by the economical superstructure as the most important single factor. Other thinkers of globalisation explicitly called for different factors, they could hardly escape unifactorial analysis. Meyer (1979a; 1980) sees political and economic factors as the main sources of value creation, and appeals to the world culture and educational systems as well. His aim is to bridge the gap between the nation and the global, but he does not go far in analysing these factors. Therefore globalisation remains driven by a world political economy. Further, since he restricts the economy to commodity economy, the idea of polity also seems to function as a kind of residual category subsuming all action except that of economy, that is, the political economy shrank to only polity. The same can somewhat be said of Robertson who counted the global culture as the main mover of the global system and finally Luhmann who lays emphasis on global society (Beyer 1994).

These debates enable theorists to see the multidimensional nature of the global system. Giddens (1990: 63) points to modernity, arguing that “modernity is inherently globalising”. In his analysis, four elements stand out as globalising agents: the rise of
the nation-state system, the emergence of world military blocs, the development of world capitalism, and the rise of international division of labour which concern industrial developments. One of the most important effects of industrialism has been the transformation of technologies of communications (Ibid. 70-78). Appadurai (1990) also suggests a multidimensional model. He traces out five fluid "scapes" of global interaction: (a) the ethnoscape of mobile population; (b) the technoscape of diffusion and adoption of mechanical and informational technologies; (c) the financescape of global capital; (d) the mediascape; and (e) the ideoscape of political discourses (cited in Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996). Accordingly, analysis of globalisation until now progressed from political-economy base to socio-cultural base, from a single-factor model to a multidimensional model and instead of a single-disciplinary approach, called for interdisciplinary treatment, (Robertson 1990; Wallerstein 1979).

In order to analyse the origin of globalisation many scholars began with the extension and reformulating of the modernisation theory. They actually tried to extract globalisation theories from the modernisation thesis. Consequently, scholars such as Giddens, (1990); Luhmann (1982; 1990b); Beyer (1994) explicitly stressed the relation between 'modernisation' and 'globalisation'. Here, attention was not only on how societies turned to modernisation but modernisation was also conceived as an imperative stage for globalisation. Beyer (1994: 8) argues that "globalisation theories are the development of the fundamental modernisation thesis". He says that fundamental changes in the West during the past centuries brought about a new kind of society. Globalisation thesis thus adds to this thesis that modernisation in the West directly resulted in the spread of certain vital institutions in other parts of the globe, especially capitalism, nation-state, and scientific rationality in the form of new technology and, critically, that the global spread has snowballed into a new social unit which is much more than a simple example of western modernity.

With these issues in mind let us now see what is happening on the ground by globalisation. According to Beyer (1994) globalisation thesis posits that social communication links are world-wide and increasing in density. This means that, unlike
in the past, people, cultures, societies and civilisations are now in regular and almost unavoidable contact. As a result, on one hand, we see the conflicts that arise as quite diverse and often contradictory cultural clashes within the same social unit, and on the other, globalising socio-structural and cultural forces furnish a common context that weakens the differences among these ways. Thus a twofold result. But Beyer goes on to say, whilst this could somehow explain the conflict in the global system, it does not penetrate far enough to the heart of the matter. To do so requires a more multifaceted approach.

As particular cultures or identities comes into contact, not only do their differences show, but it becomes clear that diverse ways of living are largely human constructions. It follows then that none of them is self-evidently ‘correct’ by comparison. Life-world and world views appear largely arbitrary; and can be changed. Under the conditions of globalisation, this challenging of identities becomes unavoidable, because the existence of powerful social structures, in many ways, overwhelm all group and personal identities, and more importantly, neutralise attempts to renew communicative isolation. Efforts on the part of many people in the world therefore to cling to, and (re) create particular identities, constantly clashes with this tendency of the global system to relativise them. The resulting conflict is then not so much against rival cultures and identities, although it seems that way to many, but against the corrosiveness of the system itself. It is a response to the mutability of character (Beyer 1994).

But why should mutability be a problem?, as Beyer put it. The rapidity, speed, direction of change as well as who controls the change, give cause for some worry. But crucially of major concern is the fact that “the global system corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities, yet also encourages the creation and revitalisation of particular identities as a way of gaining control over systemic power” (Ibid.: 3).

Putting this hypothesis into practice, many theorists of globalisation try to explain the interaction between ‘globalisation’ and what can arbitrarily be called as synonymous with ‘local’. The debate over the interaction between different patterns in the form of
new and old, traditional and modern, is reminiscent of classical sociology. Its most familiar expressions can be found in Tonnise’s distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Geselleschaft*, Durkheim’s between *mechanical* and *organic* solidarity, and Weber’s contribution to the recent theory of modernisation as well as the whole sociology of change. All these sociologists attempt to explain the process of transformation of societies and institutions from one form to anther.

In classic sociology, the distinction was between pre-modern and modern society in terms of a shift from *Gemeinschaft* or communal to *Geselleschaft* or associative structure. A key manifestation of this change is a greater differentiation of the individual from society which renders the relation between the individual and society problematic. This process occurs within a given society and therefore is endogenous. For Robertson (1992a) in globalisation the clash between *Gemeinschaft* and *Geselleschaft* cuts across contemporary societies, not just within them. To the intra-societal problem is added an inter-societal one. This complication further affects the way individuals construct themselves and therefore, how societies respond both to their individuals and to the inter-societal challenge. The core of Robertson’s argument runs roughly as follows:

Modernisation increasingly separates individuals from ‘primordial’ immersion in networks of kinship and locality (*Gemeinschaft*), fostering greater differentiation between self and society (*Gesellschaft*). Therefore modern society has two poles of identity, ‘the realm of societal-systemic functioning’ and ‘the realm of individual and relational...being’ (Robertson and Chirico 1985: 234). With globalisation this dualism is complicated by the classification of particular societies in a wider system of societies, resulting in the *relativisation* of both societies and the distinct selves. In this context, the norms and values of a particular society are pitted against images of the “good society” from other societies in the world. This juxtaposition essentially effects on how particular societies constitute themselves. Similarly, individuals form their personal identities cogniscent of the fact that their society is only one among several actual possibilities. Beyond a person’s own bipolar individual-society link of identity, there
are countless other possibilities for life-in-society. This leads to the relativised construction of personal identities drawn from a wider category of humankind. These selves in turn, further intensify the relativised constitution of national identities. Both individuals and national societies act apart within a relativising world system of societies whose common identity manifests itself in the notion of humanity. This is the point overlooked by clashes between global and local. However, to see different reactions of these forces in the face of globalisation we go back to Robertson’s typology.

Robertson identifies two types each of global Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. Firstly, a Gemeinschaft image which sees the world order made up of closed societal communities, each with its own inherent and somewhat incommunicable identity. This concept, which is the closest to an anti-global image, maintains that rejection of globalisation is just as logical an option under the objective condition of globalisation as various positive responses. Robertson mentions politico-religious ‘fundamentalist’ views as for example, in the United States or Iran. A second Gemeinschaft image considers global order possible only as far as a single global community is established, a sort of ‘global village’ or Durkheimian collective consciousness. This concept emphasises harmonisation of differences whether through absorption or toleration. The Roman Catholic Church’s views, contemporary peace movement, and various theologies of liberation are examples of this.

The two Gesellschaft versions roughly parallel these communitarian visions. Firstly, is the version which sees world order as an association of open societies with a large amount of socio-cultural interchange among them. This way preserves national societies as a central feature of the global system but, unlike in the first Gemeinschaft

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9 Indeed part of the reaction of the IRI to the DBS can be explained based on this image of Gemeinschaft, but with some reservation. Although the IRI does not seem very tolerant in its reaction to the globalisation, it is difficult to mark it as a typical example of an anti-global feature. In fact the IRI’s stance towards globalisation subsequently can be mainly marked with its search for a determinative role in the world system rather than antagonism or reverse globalisation. Regarding DBS, the IRI not only seized the opportunity to participate in international broadcasting, but also, to some extent, it has considered the necessity of the new media environment (this will be described in the following chapters). Therefore it seems that the IRI’s DBS policy can be seen in the light of clashes between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, as an inter-societal problem where globalisation pushes the Iranian society into a wider system of societies, resulting in the relativisation of both societies and individual selves.
view, their interrelationship helps them further their own interests somewhat and those of the whole. Various liberal nationalisms around the world, such as in contemporary Quebec, may serve as examples.

The second *Gesellschaft* image places minimal emphasis on the integrity of national societies, and sees global order as possible through deliberate and systematic world organisation. There is far less reliance here on cathectic forces to constitute the whole. Examples of this most political of options are the advocates of different forms of world government and the Wallersteinians.

Robertson thus sees trends in the religious response to globalisation in the light of the two Gemeinschaft conceptions of global order. On the one hand, close ties between particular religions and cultures promote formation of national and personal identities vis-à-vis the global system. The clearest example of this is the most recent rise of ‘fundamentalist’ religious movements in countries as diverse as the United States, Iran, India and Japan. Robertson suggests that they are in response to the relativising aspect of globalisation. On the other hand, the crystallisation of concerns that characterise globalisation is a breeding ground for ‘world theologies’ that address the eschatological implications of an inclusive humanity. According to Robertson, the Roman Catholic Church, and other liberation theologies that have emerged since the 1960s; certain eco-theologies, including the Green movement; the Unification church; and Soka Gakkai in Japan are examples of this.

Clearly as Robertson shows, many of these formations are not simply or purely religious, but also political. The question now, is how is this so? The relativisation of national societies and individuals promotes the search for particularistic identities, indeed re-particularisation, and the meaning of the universal whole. According to Beyer (1994) socio-cultural particularism enters the dominant structure of global society, what Robertson calls the coincidence of the universalisation of particularisms and the particularisation of universalism.

Relativisation of particularism in Robertson’s perspective is paralleled by Parsons and Luhmann’s notion of inclusion and exclusivity. For Parsons (1971) inclusion is an
integrative response to evolutionary change. As modern societies grow in complexity, they have to accommodate many more differentiated and adaptively upgraded units within their normative structures. Parsons focuses on the American experience and calls inclusion, the process by which previously excluded groups attain full citizenship or membership in the societal community (cited in Bourricaud 1981).

But Luhmann, in contrast to Parsons, who sees inclusion as positively integrative process, sees this concept in a negative light and points to the elimination of structures that oppose functional differentiation (Beyer 1994). The whole notion of social integration receives a rather different cast in this theory. Luhmann's notion of inclusion is thus more in tune with global reality because, as functional systems globalise, so does the process of inclusion. For a better understand of this conceptualisation we must look at the Luhmannian assertion that dominance of functional differentiation is the main characteristic of modern global society.

Luhmann like others maintains that modernisation and globalisation are initially related. Therefore, modern society is a product of change in Western society in the type of inner-societal differentiation that dominates. Luhmann sees modernity as characterised not primarily by a quantitative increase of differentiation, but more importantly by qualitative change in the way in which we form the main divisions of social communication. Thus he draws attention to a shift from dominance of stratified differentiation to the dominance of functional differentiation in modern society (Luhmann 1982).

It is important to understand what Luhmann means by stratified and functional differentiated societies. Fundamentally it must be noted that stratification can be a form of subsystem differentiation and not just the unequal distribution of status, wealth, power, and other forms of influence. Stratificatory differentiation creates subsystems according to rank: the main question here is to which stratum or status-group an action belongs. This is similar to segmentary or core/ periphery differentiation as each of these primarily look at the group membership of the person acting. Factors such as whether an individual is a member of this clan or that, a noble family or a common one, whether
she or he is from the city or the countryside, from this village or that, are very important. But what is clearly evident in stratified society also, is the domination of the upper, ruling strata. These control much of the political, economic, and other forms of social power, and also define the effective limits of the society. The reach of their communication, fluid and imprecise as it may be, is identical with that boundary. As Wallerstein (1974b) shows, the action of the ruling strata pushes the total division of labour beyond the boundaries of mini-systems. Luhmann further adds that the status of these upper strata is not just restricted to economic or any other strictly functional criterion.

But this does not mean that the dominance of stratified differentiation excludes the presence and importance of functional distinctions, such as an economic division of labour or specialised institutions like political bureaucracies and religious orders. What Luhmann means is that these help create and maintain the differences between strata, but do not cut across the primary divisions. The control of major institutions by the upper strata enable them to express and maintain their privileged status.

Luhmann therefore sees the re-configuration of these stratified priorities as the main feature of the shift to modernity in western society. Attention has now been drawn to how the status-group as an important feature is progressively being undermined, and the emergence of institutional spheres in which action belongs to the function it fulfils and not as earlier, the status of the actor. The traditional nobilities, merchants and peasant strata (systems), are replaced by political, economic, scientific, educational, religious, and other systems. But other types of differentiation also exist under modern conditions. These include segmentation, especially of geopolitical divisions between states and the religious distinctions of faiths or traditions and stratification especially within the economy and the organisations. But these, along with others such as core/ periphery divisions, operate according to Luhmann, to structure and reinforce the dominant differentiation of functional systems of social communication.
Luhmann also points out that, stratified societies were less complex than modern society, but it was also, therefore, not as difficult to thematise them effectively. The upper strata were able to impose the view that they, although tiny minorities, represented the society as whole. Consequently the boundaries of their society were determined by the range of their political, legal, and religious domination, while the values and purposes embedded in their communication came to be seen as synonymous with those of the society as such. As both Parsons and Robertson say, the upper strata determined the telic ends of these societies despite the fact that much of what happened among the vast majority in the lower strata may have suggested very different norms and boundaries.

Now, with the primacy of functional differentiation, problems arise in old solutions for thematising society. Luhmann sees two reasons for this. Firstly, the adaptive upgrading resulting from functional specialisation gives rise to an overabundance of possibilities for social action from each subsystem. The tremendous growth during modern times of wealth, state power, technology, and educational facilities all around the world would serve as examples. The greatly increased complexity that this reflects undermines the effectiveness of any self-description for the reasons already mentioned. Secondly, the relation of societal subsystems under functional differentiation is not structurally hierarchical, and therefore none of them could clearly be said to represent the whole. However, Luhmann points out that some subsystems, such as the economic and scientific/technological, are more favoured by modern conditions because of the clearly adaptive orientation of their expectation structures. If anything, however this makes them more effective modes of communication, not the source of clearly self-evident symbols to thematise the whole and its telos.

When such a discussion is continued, it seems Robertson and Luhmann's perspective as well as Beyer's annexations, alongside McQuail's contribution in media theories, are sufficient to built up a theoretical framework of media policy research. This chapter emphasises this as an adequate approach, in order to outline different
policy options and understand the impact of global issues on policies. Such a twofold approach is relevant and necessary to the understanding of the social context of contemporary policy-making decisions.

With these issues and concepts in mind let us give a brief account of how these pointers will be utilised in dealing with the IRI DBS policy. The underlying hypothesis here is that the most strategic aim of the IRI's DBS policy is to save the cultural, religious, national and individual identity from the influences of globalisation. Although the policy is also concerned with maintaining the power elite interests. This argument however raises several questions such as the relation between DBS and globalisation, and whether challenging DBS, is parallel to avoiding globalisation. Another question is how globalisation and therefore DBS threaten political systems and finally the consequences of these developments for cultural/media policy. Regarding the first question the fact of the matter is, that the communication industry is an inseparable part of globalisation without which globalisation hardly makes sense. This argument, as noted before, is properly illustrated in Appadurai's (1990) definition of globalisation where he points to the diffusion of information technologies and media as two of the five fold fluids of globalisation. Whether or not communication should be counted as part and parcel of globalisation, in practice it plays a significant role in the acceleration of globalisation. Therefore it makes sense to expect communication as one of the focal points of globalisation debates in many countries including the IRI.

To answer the question of how globalisation, and globalisation of communication are threatening cultural identity, one may refer to the relevant opinion. According to some of the most renowned globalisation theorists, such as Robertson (1985b) and Beyer (1994), globalisation brings about a relativisation of national societies and individuals which in turn encourages the search for particularistic identities. According to the IRI authorities, cultural, religious, national and individual identities are being endangered by the DBS's programmes which expose the nation to the assimilating production of the West. This approach to DBS also can be explained based on Luhmann's concept of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' where the whole endeavour
of the IRI is to keep the Iranian society aloof from integrating into the global system unless they can maintain the Islamic particularity. The latter perception, which has been one of the pillars of the IRI’s cultural policies since its establishment, is known as *Tahajom-e Farangi* (cultural invasion) discourse, or in the present leader’s words *Shabeekhon-e Farangi* (the cultural surprise attack). To repel this misfortune, a process for the revitalisation of cultural/religious identity, which had begun in the early days of the Republic, was accelerated by the introduction of DBS. This is evident in the intensified *Tahajom-e Farangi* discourse since 1989-90 and in the first phase of the spread of satellite dishes, 1992-1994. However, as stated before, challenging globalisation and internationalisation of broadcasting, by adoption of a tough media policy, such as ratification of a law for prohibiting access to the satellite programmes, does not necessarily mean that the IRI’s reaction to these phenomena is inflexible.

Luhmann’s concepts of stratified and functional differentiation can also address one of the main sources of socio-political concern of the IRI with DBS. This is mainly because the Islamic Republic initially is a religious entity which politically features stratified differentiation. The very clerical power elite which has dominated the state is an entity distinguishable from the rest of the society. This power elite reserves the right for itself to define the socio-cultural boundaries of the society based on its norms and values which are supposedly inspired by the “sublime teachings of Islam”. In such a religio-political system, the criteria for socio-political participation of the citizens is based on religious beliefs generally, and loyalty to the religious power elites in particular. The widespread debate of *Takhasous* (expertise) and/or *Ta’ahoad* (commitment/religiosity) which were formed in Iran immediately after the revolution was in fact inspired from such a root. In response to the criticism that the system was ignoring expertise (functional differentiation), the power elites accepted the role of expertise but claimed that it was just a necessary condition for socio-political participation but not an adequate one. According to the dominant discourse, sufficient condition for socio-political participation required loyalty to the religious principles of the Republic. This trend was contradicting with the functional structure of the
modernising Iranian society. Globalisation and DBS added another contradiction to this by exposing messages from all over the world advocating functional differentiation. By globalisation and DBS the IRI politico-religious identity indeed faces a transformation from a stratified differentiation to a functional based system, a transformation that could hardly satisfy the clerical caste’s concerns.

In one way or another, it seems these developments are gradually modifying the IRI media policy perspectives. While the IRI policy, until the introduction of DBS, was a typical example of media-centred, dominance, centripetal and cultural, in the post-DBS period which is marked by ratification of the prohibition law on 12 February 1995, we can see some elements of change. The idea that the media is at the centre of the universe is about to split, as currently there are some reservations about the role of society and individual as active agents in their media uses. Regarding dominance versus pluralism, some authorities are convinced that media should offer a range of choices in message and ideology. In comparison between centrifugal and centripetal, there are individuals who perceive media as contributing to some positive changes, the introduction of new ideas and diversity in the society. And finally, although industrial policy is not yet a preferred policy, new developments in broadcasting industry show some signs of quantitative development, concomitant with economic thought about the broadcasting industry, such as giving room to private sector activity and adopting a subscription policy and advertising. These new trends are not only strongly advocated by the reformist faction but also have support among the traditional faction.
Chapter III
Methodology

Description of the characteristics of the research

The research aim is to analyse the reaction of the IRI to the foreign satellite broadcasters. Thus the unit of analysis here is national. In terms of past studies of this topic in Iran, one can say that despite many articles about different aspects of DBS only a few of them have addressed the issue systematically. Amongst the prior systematic research studies, is one that conducted by Mohsenian Rad (1994), which is a secondary and comparative study about the stances of Asian countries towards DBS. Another was an opinion poll of Tehran residents about television programmes after the mandate for the collecting of satellite dishes, conducted by the Centre for Study and Research and Program Evaluation of VVIR (CSRPE).¹⁰

The whole process of data collection for this research took four months from February 1996 until June 1996 and covers the related developments from 1993 until end 1996. The place of data collection was Tehran. However, to trace the activities of satellite equipment smugglers, I travelled to Boushaher and Genaveh in the south of Iran. As will be described in chapter VI, this was to discover the make, model and number of satellite dishes which are smuggled into the country. The duration of the field work clearly indicates the difficulties the research was faced with the interviews and other forms of data collecting. This study is based on multiple sources of evidence including documentation, and interview protocol. Also from the research strategy point of view, it is a combination of a case study and historical methods where it refers to the background of media policy in Iran.

As discussed in the previous chapters, there are many factors that influence media policy. Of these, one is the perspectives and tendencies of politicians and policy-makers regarding matters such as the preference between different policy options, and the other is the socio-cultural and economic imperatives at work. What difference the

¹⁰ In Persian, Markaz-e Motaleat va Takhghihat va Sanjesh-e Barnamehay-e Seda va Semay-e Jomhouri-ye Islami-ye Iran
policy makes will depend on how policy-makers interpret and react to these concerns. Dealing with policy-makers' tendencies, explaining how these tendencies form a policy and determine its final impacts, and why the authorities move towards a specific option, in a methodological sense, however, needs several pointers to come across with the research methodology.

In order to locate the study in an appropriate methodological procedure, the research needs to develop its specific strategy and design. Yin (1994: 1) asserts "each research strategy has particular advantages and disadvantages, depending on three conditions: (a) the type of research questions, (b) the control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events". Based on such a description, when a research, like the present one, deals with 'how' or 'why' questions and examines contemporary events, but can not manipulate the relevant behaviours, the research is more likely to be a qualitative case study. Among these conditions the type of questions are very important since they determine whether the research is going to be an explanatory, exploratory, or experimental. For example, explanatory research is more likely to lead to the use of case study or historical study as the preferred strategy.

Where Yin (1994) emphasises the type of questions for adopting a case study strategy, Schramm (1971) and Majchrzak (1984) respectively cite the topic of 'decision' and 'policy' as the major focus of case study. As Schramm states "the essences of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that, it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (1971: 6). According to Majchrzak "case studies tend to be a frequently used policy research method as they are usually quick, cost efficient, and allow room for impressionistic analyses of a situation" (1984: 63). Other topics have been also listed as the frequent subject of case study including "individuals", "organisations" "processes", "programmes", "institutions" and even "events". However, citing the topic is surely insufficient for establishing the needed
definition. Yin (1994:13) claims that the case study inquiry is a strategic one which includes many characteristics. Among these are:

° it copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result.

° it relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to cover in a triangulating fashion, and as another result.

° it benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

In other words, the case study as a research strategy comprises an all encompassing method with the logic of design incorporating a specific approach to data collection and to data analysis. In this sense, the case study is not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone (Stoecker, 1991) but a comprehensive research strategy\(^\text{11}\).

**Case Study Design**

According to Yin (1994), there are four types of case study designs: (a) single-case (holistic) designs, (b) single-case (embedded) designs, (c) multiple-case (holistic) designs, and (d) multiple-case (embedded) designs. However, as he emphasises, a primary distinction in designing case studies is between single and multiple designs. That is, the need for a decision, prior to any data collection, on whether a single-case study or multiple cases are going to be used to address the research questions. In this sense, in the present study, 'single' case study is an appropriate strategy. This is because its focus is on a single case, namely the IRI DBS policy, although this is approached from a different perspective.

Following Yin (1994), the single case study is an appropriate design for several reasons. One rationale is that it can represent a critical case in testing a theory. In this way it can contribute to knowledge and theory building. Such a study can even help to re-focus further investigation in an entire field. A second rationale is that it can be used in studying extreme or unique cases. In such circumstances, the single-case study is an

\(^{11}\) For a brief history of case study, critique of the case study and response to the critique, see Stoecker 1991.
appropriate research design. A third rationale is the revelatory case. This situation exists when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon somewhat inaccessible to scientific investigation. These three rationales serve as the major reasons for conducting single case studies all, in one way or another, related to the present study. There are other situations in which the single-case study may be conducted as a prelude to further study, such as the use of case studies as exploratory devices or the conduct of a pilot case that is the first of a multiple-case study. By contrast, when the same study may contain more than a single subject the study has to use a multiple-case design. However, in some fields, this design needs a different "methodology" than single design.

Data Collection

Evidence for case studies may come from different sources such as documentation and archival records, interviews, direct and participant observation and physical artefacts. Schatzman and Strauss (1973), Murphy (1980), and Webb at el. (1981) discuss in detail specific data collection techniques used in case studies. Here, in this study, data was mainly generated by (a) interview and (b) printed material (including official documents), although my own observations have supported the whole procedure of presentation. Having discussed this, I now turn to the detailed procedures which I followed in interviews and printed material.

A. Interviews

One of the most important sources of information for case studies is the interview. The interview may technically take several forms such as open-ended, focused, structured and semi-structured. The type of interview needed for a given investigation might be conducted in the form of ethnographic interviews, informant interviews, respondent interviews, narrative interviews or focus group interviews (Lindlif, 1995). Most commonly, the case study interview is of an open-ended nature, in which the interviewer can ask the key respondents for the facts of the matter as well as for the respondents' opinions about events. In some situations it is possible to ask
respondents to give their own insights into certain occurrences which can be used as the basis for further research inquiry.

The more a respondent provides information, the more possible it is to consider him/her as an "informant" rather than a mere respondent. Key information is often critical to the success of a case study. Informants not only provide the case study investigator with insight into a matter but can also suggest sources of proven evidence, and initiate the access to such sources. Overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence, because most case studies are about human relations. These human relations should be reported through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation. They also provide a shortcut to the prior history of the situation, helping to identify other relevant sources of evidence. Here, in this study an open-ended interview was applied as the major technique of interview, while the type of interview is informant interview.

Phases of Interview

Since this research has mainly relied on interviews, below I have tried to describe the approaches through which I accessed the relevant sources:

Selecting the Interviewees

In the first instance it seems that in any kind of policy research the process of interview begins with selecting the interviewees. However, prior to this we must identify the related bodies of policy-making. At the time of preparation for the interviews several bodies were involved in DBS policy making, of those, Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic (VVIR), the MCIG, the Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone (PTT), the Plan and Budget organisation (PBO), the Higher Council of Cultural Revolution (HCCR), the Interior Ministry and Majles are important. These organisations in one way or another, were dealing with the emergence of foreign satellite; VVIR due to its role in broadcasting industry, MCIG because of its role in controlling content of media, PTT as a result of controlling transmission, HCCR regarding its role in cultural policy, PBO because of its role in any plan for the future
regarding broadcasting development, the Interior Ministry due to its role in dealing with the transaction of satellite equipment, and finally, Majles due to its role in ratification of policies and law-making. Since I had planned to use in-depth interviews, I calculated I could obtain access to three persons in each of the above mentioned organisations, except the Interior Ministry; thus, in total, eighteen key persons were chosen. But during the field work, I found that the HCCR was not taking an active role in satellite decision-making. This was despite the fact that, at the beginning of raising satellite issues, this institution was charged with the duty by the government, of developing a plan for managing satellite affairs. As a result of this development I decreased the number of interviews from eighteen to fifteen. In another development, since DBS policy-making was the subject of competition between different factions, the traditional faction in Majles was taking the lead by developing, submitting and ratifying the plan. Regarding this development on the one hand, and on the other hand the difficulties which I had with other potential interviewees in terms of access, I decided to increase the number of interviews with the representatives of Majles. This set aside two interviewees of other organisations. Furthermore, by the way of conducting interviews with Majles representatives, I tried to obtain access to the members of the Commission of Culture (Art) and Islamic Guidance (CCIG), the PTT Commission, as well as the Plan and Budget Commission (PBC), but in particular the CCIG and PTT, as the main poles of debates over the issue during the Majles marathon. The importance of the CCIG, as noted above, was that the Plan for Prohibiting Access to the Satellite Equipment, was indeed suggested by this Commission. In this way, I could develop a list of 15 persons as my potential interviewees with five additional names on my reserve list to substitute the selected interviewees, if they were inaccessible (Table.1).

Developing the interviews: Overall Problems

Conducting research interviews in different levels and for different purposes is a complicated process since all procedure depends on the interviewee's acceptance of being interviewed and his/her collaboration during the interview. Thus a great deal of effort should be made to persuade a potential interviewee and getting his/her permission
as well as arranging the time and place of interview. When it comes to politicians, leaders, elites and policy-makers, the task becomes more difficult since they are basically reluctant to be interviewed due to being cautious about the consequences of their responses. Also they have busy schedules, and arranging a time and place can be difficult. These barriers, to some extent, confronted the present study. As stated earlier, politicians and policy-makers are very busy, and so they often rejected my requests for access to interview. The rejection of several potential interviewees was mainly due to their work commitments, political reasons, where their conservative trends did not allow them to comment about the religio-political dominant view regarding the issue, and probably lack of insight into the subject, despite their evident responsibility.

Considering the insufficient knowledge of some interviewees about the projected issues, it is worth emphasising, that I was predicting this problem before going to the field. One of the reasons for choosing an in-depth interview as my data collection design was related to the novelty of the phenomena and the fact that many related authorities in that time were not familiar with the issues. For example, some concepts that are very popular in the “North” such as “deregulation” are still unknown in Iran and even linguistically there is a controversy over the equivalent word in Persian. The problem of insufficient knowledge by relevant authorities about the new media/technology development and its socio-economic consequences is initially rooted in the speed of change in both technological and socio-economical domains. And also, in the case of Iran, in the reluctance of the authorities to be involved in such issues before the state’s official views are announced.

Potential interviewees in different organisations initially agreed to give interview, but often with certain conditions. They asked me to provide a brief proposal to be reviewed by 'gatekeepers' of their organisation. I had a brief proposal ready, but they requested an exclusive proposal according to their research needs. Their intention was firstly, to gain a deeper insight into my study, and secondly, in the case of acceptance, they wanted to carry out the research with my assistance. My proposal did
not fully resemble what they were looking for and I had to provide different proposals for different institutions. Although I developed these proposals based on my original proposal, it eventually cost me an extra month in time. By handing the proposals over, two out of three applicants agreed to give an interview. However, the third applicant turned down my request, not directly and honestly but after one month's correspondence, telephone and face to face negotiation. Later on, I found that they actually wanted to lose me in the bureaucratic process. In contrast, some interviewees such as the VVIR deputy immediately agreed to conduct a five hour interview.

Among other problems one was that during the interview some of the interviewees changed their mind and asked to make the interview shorter. This was despite the fact that based on our agreement, the interviews were scheduled for at least two hours. In addition, I needed more time to discuss different aspects of the issues and build a common understanding of the new situation for further dialogue. Also, since satellite debates are very sensitive and perceived as an politico-ideological issue, in some instances, the interviewees were escaping from responses to sensitive issues.

Furthermore during interviewing it became clear that the interviewees' responses were political rather than professional. This is to say that there was frequently emphasis on the political implications of the issue in a conspiratorial manner, rather than attention paid to the new developments in the communication sphere. Many of the phrases which the interviewees used repeatedly during the interviews to describe the situation regarding foreign satellite programmes were the same as those set by the ruling elite to express their negative views. Examples of this include comparing foreign satellites and their programmes to "the cultural artillery of the enemy" and "a cultural invasion". Finally some of the interviewees were trying to concentrate on questions which they preferred to answer to escape from unwanted questions. This reaction reminded me of the argument of Duverger, M (1961), about interviewing the leaders and elites. He believes that in practice, this type of interview is often misleading, since the leaders do not speak frankly. This is because they think that a significant amount of what they know are state secrets. They manipulate the reality more than ordinary
people as a result of sympathy to their party or political faction, or even through philanthropic feelings. Nevertheless, as he emphasises, interviewing such people is essential since the study of a party, an influential group, a decision, an institution, and so on, is only possible by conducting interviews with such leaders.

To sum up, the absence of any independent body of media policy-making made it difficult to find the right interviewees. The scattered organisations and persons dealing with policy-making had made an uncertain atmosphere, as a result of which I was always in doubt as to whether I was talking to the right person. This means many organisations and people, visibly or invisibly, are actually involved in policy making and at the same time, it seemed no particular role was attributable to any single organisation, or person. However, finding the right persons for interview was just part of the problem since each selected interviewee had his own policy towards the research. This issue brings us back to the situation of research in Iran as a whole. Generally speaking, conducting a socio-political research in Iran has always been problematic. This is especially the case while the research deals with contemporary political issues. Although this problem exists in many developing countries, Iran has its own specifications. Among them one can strongly emphasise that, despite the significant background of research and investigation in Islamic and in Iranian civilisations, the modern pattern of systematic research still has not been institutionalised. This problem leaves the research to the individual. That is, while a few people are in one way or another sympathetic to the research, the system in total does not support the research and researchers. Although much of the problem stems from political hardship, the political system should not be blamed for all of it. Here it can be argued that the Iranian people are culturally very conservative in their communication and exchange of information. They always try to conceal even the self-evident matters and build a mysterious and complicated world for themselves. Their notion towards events are very conspiratorial based, therefore they are always suspicious about others’ questions. Political pressure during the time and the lack of up-to-date boundaries between
intelligence and secret information and common knowledge, in recent times are part of the reasons for this reaction.

**The Data Recording Procedures**

Today, the usual way of recording interviews is with a tape recorder. However, this depends on interviewee acceptance or rejection in the use of such a facility. As the interviews show despite the fact that I had planned to tape all the interviews, only six interviewees out of fifteen agreed their voice being taped. In the case of a rejection the interview was recorded in writing. The taped interviews were transcribed and translated for ease of interpretation (table. 1).

**B. Printed Materials**

In this study printed materials were used as complementary sources along with interviews. Collecting relevant printed material seemed essential from the outset partly for compensating the insufficiency of interviews. This problem occurred, and so this strategy proved to be useful. Here, printed materials consist of Press articles, (newspaper, Magazine, quarterly, newsletter) and government publications.

**The Press**

Among the printed materials, I have mainly relied on newspapers and magazines. As stated in chapter I, once foreign satellites began broadcasting throughout the country, the Iranian press began to reflect people, government, state, Majles and other institutions' points of view. Such materials are a rich source of information for research. They contain news and information about the number of foreign satellite channels that can be received in Iran, the number of dishes; the daily seizure of satellite dishes in provinces; discourses around the issue by public, state and clergies etc. There were several reasons for the unprecedented contribution of the press. Firstly, the press emerged as the voice of both advocates and opponent of the DBS. Secondly, as stated earlier, the introduction of DBS was unexpected and the politico-legal system was not prepared for this. This caused ambiguity about the DBS-related issues and as a result those issues spread across the country. Thirdly, DBS programmes were perceived as a threat to religious and national identity, and therefore,
many different newspapers and magazines, reflecting different perspectives, began to write about it. In this regard, the negative impacts of satellite programmes on families were discussed extensively, particularly since the authorities advocated expansion of early anti-DBS feelings among the public. According to an aide in the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance "to make people aware of the negative aspects of the satellite programmes we had to start 'Mowj Afarein'\(^\text{12}\) (aggrandisement) by propagating satellite issues between the masses". Finally, as described in chapter V, pro-satellite programme groups also actively contributed to the debates. These trends gave grounds for the spread of the issue by the press and depending on the stance of each paper, they published different points of view. The major issues and discourses published in the press include: the effects of satellite programmes on national and religious identity; the possibility or impossibility of preventing satellite signals via, for example jamming; the sufficiency of prohibition bill; the sufficiency of domestic television through the provision of compatible programmes.

**Selection of Press Materials**

The process of finding appropriate articles in different magazines and newspapers needed to be systematically organised, especially since each of these sources had their own archival approach. Some newspapers such as Hamshahri, were computerised, therefore searching for selected subjects was not difficult. For searching in other printed materials I mainly used indexing sources, such as the Index of Cultural Articles in the Publication of IRI\(^\text{13}\), published by MCIG; Nemayeh, a monthly indexing journal of newspapers and magazines articles, published since August 1991, and the "Index of Articles on Media" in Rasaneh, a quarterly journal of media studies and research. Also, to be certain that few articles had been missed, the main daily papers, such as Kayhan, Ettela'at, Salam and Resalat were reviewed, whether through the printed newspaper itself or through microfilm and microfiche, which are mainly available in the IRI news agency. In this way the vast majority of satellite-related articles in printed materials were collected. From March 1994 until March 1995, this

\(^{12}\text{Literally, creating waves or wave-making.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Fehrest-e Maghalat-e Farhangy dar Nashreyat-e Jomhouri-ye Islami-ye Iran}\)
produced about two hundred articles and several hundred news and interview clips. However, due to the focus of the study, not all of these materials have been used in analysis. For example, many articles focus on the technical dimensions of satellite broadcasting which were not related to my discussion. Among the most relevant articles were those which consisted of policy issues; popular discussion around the DBS, government actions in terms of developing national networks, whether by satellite or terrestrial means; the expansion of broadcasting nationally and internationally; codifying law and regulation; polemics and discourses about the subject, and so on. The main discussion of this material can be found in chapter V.

**Government Publications**

In this study, government publications were an important source and include those articles and research produced or published by governmental institutions including: MCIG; the Institute of Visual Media (IVM) \(^{14}\); VVIR; PIT; PBO and CSRPE. It is worth mentioning that in this research no confidential document (if any exist) has been used.

**Data Analysis**

The first and more preferred strategy for data analysis in this study is to follow the propositions and the theoretical foundations that led the research to the case study.\(^{15}\) Basically most of the case studies follow a proposition in which direct attention is given to something that is examined within the scope of the study. The proposition helps to focus attention on certain data and to ignore other, to organise the entire case study and to define alternative explanations to be examined. This proposition directed the research to choose a set of prior theories and indicated where to look for relevant evidence. For case studies, theory development as part of the design phase is essential, whether the ensuing case study's purpose is to develop or to test theory. The simple goal of theory in case study is to have a sufficient plan for the study. Since the problem of this study is to explore the underlying elements of the IRI DBS policy within the new media


\(^{15}\) On this, see chapters 1 and 2
environment, not only did the study rely on a set of propositions and theories, but also the data (particularly the discourses), was analysed based on these propositions and theories.

Since one chapter of the thesis has been allocated to the DBS discourse, here I will end the present chapter with a brief note about the sources which have been used and the way in which they have been classified and applied. The source of the above noted discourses was the press, mainly the daily papers. To use these materials, firstly the related articles were collected and then classified based on the main subject. As a result of this classification, four axes of discourse were identified as below, (a) discussion about the potential of the new communication technology particularly with respect to the fact that they are able to bypass any physical, political and legal obstacle, (b) the law, or indeed the prohibition law, regarding its ability to control the situation, (c) the effects of foreign programmes on Iranian audiences and finally, (d) the potential of domestic radio and television to meet domestic needs in terms of news, information and entertainment. Where these topics were the main concern of people and statesmen, the religious discourse mainly centred upon the religious legitimacy of DBS and its programmes.
Chapter IV

A Brief History of Broadcasting Policies in pre-and post-Revolutionary Iran

To make sense of the recent DBS policy in Iran this chapter looks back at the Iranian broadcasting policies since the establishment of radio and television. However, to familiarise us with the historical practice of Iranian media policy, its history and foundations, the discussion goes further back and briefly examines press policies from its beginning. It may help to show how the background and general notion of media policy influences decision-making for a particular medium, e.g. for DBS. Before approaching these matters it is worthy to note that as a result of the lack of cultural and media policy in a White Paper, in both pre and post revolutionary Iran, this chapter had to rely on the available documents. These documents are to some extent scattered and are mainly limited to broad statements which have been published in different sources, while none of them are comprehensive. Existing sources include (a) the constitutional laws, i.e. the constitution of monarchy and the Islamic Republic regime; (b) the general introduction and the relative chapters of Development Plans; (c) the introduction of press or broadcasting memoranda; (d) the enactment of the law for the foundation of radio, television or news agencies, particularly at the beginning of the law and regulation enacted for different media; (e) inaugural addresses of media, delivered by high ranking authorities, and finally, (f) in limited books and articles written about the media and media policy in Iran. It is worth mentioning that these sources are often misleading, if the investigators are not involved with the actual policies, then they trapped by the differences between the proclaimed policy and the actual one.

An Overview of Press Policies from the Beginning Until the Present Time

The history of media policy in Iran goes back to the Qajar dynasty, marked by the establishment of the first Iranian newspapers, *Kaqaz-e Akhbar* (newspaper) 1837 (1252 A. H.), *Vaghayeh Ittefaqiyeh* (The Current Events) 1851 (1267 A. H.) and *Tabriz Newspaper*, 1858. However, from the beginning of the publication of *Kaqaz-e*
Akhbar until 1863 (1280 A. H.) when Nasir-al Din Shah (1848-1896), one of the late Qajar monarchs, appointed "the Office of Domestic Press" to control the printed materials and publishing houses, there was not any official body of supervision and policy-making for this medium (Brojerdi Alavi 1995:51) for three decades. Also it took almost four decades until, in 1878 (1296 A. H.), Conte de Mont Ferte, (an Italian who was the head of Tehran's police), was ordered to write the first "Press Law" (Ghazi Zadeh, 1995: 67). Nonetheless, during this policy and regulations vacuum, the press was actually led by an "unwritten policy", oriented towards boosting the Shah's and royal family's prestige. To illustrate one of the features of this procedure, one can refer to the style of Kaqaz-e Akhbar in which it had to praised the Shah to be able to do its daily business. As Brojerdi Alavi (1995: 49) notes "a content analysis of the first volume of the Kaqaz-e Akhbar shows the Shah's name with different titles has been repeated 18 times on the front page of this paper [viz.]: Shahansh-e Eslam Panah (under the protection of Islam's Shah), Shahriyar-e Edalat Assar (the egalitarian Shah), Khosrow-e Adi Parvar (the fostering of justice Shah), Sultan-e Adel (Sultan the just) Mo-azam-o- lah (honourable), Padeshah-e Eslam (the King of Islam), Khaqan-e Maghfour (the forgiven Khaqan, title of Chinese emperors)...". This was despite the fact that the managing editor of the newspaper, Mirza Salih Shirazi, was very committed to informing people about daily events and to introduce the manifestations of Western civilisation by introducing new concepts such as 'national government', 'liberty', 'law', 'social security' and 'a free press'. In this way, both members of the press and the governing body of the country were very keen to use the press as the means of change. However, while the members of the press looked at the newspaper as the agent of social change, the elite tried to use it as a means of maintaining the status quo.

From the early days of the press a contradictory trend began to dominate the Iranian media policy. The ruling elites considered the media as an appropriate tool of manipulation of people and as a justification of their policies, so they were keen to expand these channels of communication. However, since the expansion of media, in
one way or another, increased the awareness of the masses, they reserved the right to regulate the media system as much as possible. Since these regulations illustrated the orientations of a policy and indeed a political system in the eyes of international observers, the law-makers tried to come up with a sort of internationally acceptable set of regulations. To overcome this contradiction the related organisations responsible for the control of the press, e.g. the ministries of information and intelligence and the police, who carried out the law, were acting beyond the enacted laws and regulations. Not surprising that the repetition of these kinds of law-breaking during the time resulted in breaches of the sacredness of the law among the Iranian people. To cut a long story short, from 1837 (the establishment of the first Iranian newspaper) until 1979, the Iranian press, most of the time, was under rigorous restrictions and censorship, whether by written, unwritten, moderate or tough regulations. Since 1906-11 until the February 1979 Revolution, the press witnessed three different press law, and from 1979 until recently two press laws have been passed, and a third one has been submitted to Majles (Rasaneh, Vol. 6., No 2, Summer 1995). Each law, supposedly, was passed to improve the last one, nevertheless, most of them have caused a deterioration in the situation of the press.

The first press law was passed in 1907 (1326 A. H.), two years after ratification of the first constitutional law and the formation of the first National Consultation Assembly (Majles). Therefore, more or less, it was the unspoken language of the revolution and adhered to the freedom of press and freedom of expression. By keeping aloof from the revolution's climate, particularly under Reza Shah's reign, this law, step by step, changed in favour of the governing body. In 1952 (1331 L. S.) the Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad-e Mossadeq received special permission from the 17th Majles for law-making, and following this permission, apparently, he personally wrote the second press law (Brojerdi Alavi, 1955: 58). Although the new law was not ideal, it made some openness for the press, therefore to some extent, the press flourished. The fall of the Mossadeq government, by an American supported coup in 1953, led to the third press law, passed in 1955 by a joint
commission of Majles and Majles-e Sena (the Senate House). The new law was overtly violating the 13th principle of the constitutional law and the 21st principle of its supplement which guaranteed press freedom (Moghadam Far, 1993: 40). The fourth press law came a couple of months after the February 1979 Revolution, in August 1979, passed by the Revolutionary Assembly which is therefore the first press law under the Islamic system. The new law cancelled all former laws and regulations, forbade the former regime's agents to publish newspapers and promised to turn over the enforcement of those parts of the press law which do not relate to the governmental sovereignty, to the syndicate of newspapers (Ibid.). The fifth press law, which was proposed by the Commission of Islamic Guidance of Majles and ratified in 1985, was a setback in comparison with the fourth press law. For example, the new law denies the rights which the former law proposed to give to the syndicate of newspapers for self-control (Moghadam Far, 1993: 37-43). The abundance of press laws during the past decade indicates the collision between the press and the ruling elite. Although the above mentioned restrictions formed a set of dependent newspapers, it also created a ring of combative journalists, challenging for freedom of expression and the freedom of the press.

To sum up, from the beginning until recently, utilising the press as a vital tool for the dissemination of the socio-political opinions of the ruling elite has been the main characteristic of press policies. However, this policy has had its own fall and rise since it was dependent on many factors. One Shah's mood, for example, according to Brojerdi Alavi (1995) and Ghazi Zadeh (1995), Mozafar-al Din Shah who was fair enough, more than his ill-natured successor Mohammed Ali Shah, tolerated the press (Ibid.). Second, the attitude and position of Prime Ministers towards the press played a significant role in the continuation of press activities, for instance, the progressive figures such as Amir Kabier (1848-1851); Amin-al Douleh (1896-1898) and Mossadeq (1951-1953) played a positive role regarding the promotion of the press. Third, socio-political developments always affected press activities, e.g. the Mashruteh movement.

During these periods due to the weakness of the central governments, whether the old or the new one, the press prospered. In contrast, in the time of absolute sovereignty the press and other media were on the defensive. Indeed "the typical pattern of Iranian political life has been that when the central authority is at its weakest, a dynamic political public sphere emerges with a variety of political groupings and communicative channels. When the central authority is strong, an atmosphere of repression exists, with central control over political activity and expression" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 54). The best example for such an argument was the exile of Reza Shah during the First World War which weakened the central state. According to Taheri (1980: 13) by August 1942 there were 50 newspapers; 120 by the winter; and 200 by the next summer. By 1945 more than 4000 newspapers, magazines, and other publications existed (quoted in Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi 1994: 55).

During the 1979 Revolution and immediately after, the country witnessed an unprecedented freedom in what newspapers could publish, and a growth in their number. For the first time, after more than half a century, newspapers felt free to publish without prior restraints or fear from the government. As time passed by, particularly after the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the country witnessed a major growth in number, diversity, and freedom in newspapers, and to some extent, the number and diversity continue today (Malek and Mohsenian Rad, 1994), if not the freedom.

For the time being, among the Iranian media, the press paces ahead in regard to its diversity, self motivated consumption, amount of information, being up-to-date, its competitiveness, and the reflection and analysis of events. Mainly because of being state-run outlets, radio and television do not enjoy such specifications, in spite of having more coverage and audience. The Iranian press, more than other media could mirror the developments of Iranian society. This is because the legal political groups and factions who are engaged in politics, the cultural forces who want to transmit their
messages across, and the professional groups who are interested in sharing the results of their experiences and researches, can only express themselves through the press. In addition, other parts of society, that is women, ethnic, and other language, religious and age groups use this channel of communication. Above all, they enjoy less restrictions, as long as they do not go too far in criticising the state. This treatment partly goes back to the state authorities’ perception of the relative significance of the electronic media. In this way, the focus of the state on electronic media makes it easier for the activities of the press. Moreover, the bulk of political factions who are loyal to the main principles of the IRI, have little need for state intervention (Hamshahri, 30 April 1996). In general, one can say adherence to the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the major factor for the continuity of a newspaper, otherwise the publisher is deprived of publishing rights. The big difference here, in comparison with past periods, is that the IRI is very straightforward in its media policy. That is to say that, unlike the former regime, here, under the IRI, there is no difference between the proclaimed policy and the actual one. To what extent these images of the press and its related policies effect broadcasting policy is a question which I now turn to.

Broadcasting and Broadcasting Policies Under the Pahlavi Dynasty

Reza Shah (1925-1941)

Broadly speaking, broadcasting policy in Iran began with the establishment of radio, during the Reza Shah period. However, the spread of radio and the institutionalisation of broadcasting policy occurred during his successor, Mohammad Reza Shah. To deal with these developments, we must first look back to the socio-political background of this period. Reza Khan, a Cossack officer when he took over the government in a military coup on February 4, 1921, was in favour of the creation of the first Iranian Republic, but in October 1925, he managed to win over the majority of the deputies of the Majles and established a new dynasty. This was contradicting the people’s will and his initial intention. Instead he appeared in the role of a nationalist leader determined to pursue the line of modernisation, which was also required by the circles of constitutionalists. Among these circles was the first set of intellectuals who
had contact with Western societies, and who began to formulate ideas and social aspirations, which had been profoundly influenced by their knowledge of European (including Russian) societies (Katouzian, 1981: 103-104). Nevertheless, Reza Shah had his own ideas for modernisation, or, as some scholars believe, he was mainly influenced by Kamal Ataturk's modernisation programmes in Turkey (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi 1994: 50). Some even go further and argue that he was instructed by "the British legation in Tehran, and through it, the Foreign Office in London" (Katouzian, 1981:81).

To start the modernisation machine, he set out to create a modern, centralised state in Iran based on a Western model of industrial development. Nevertheless, since he was not familiar with the soul and philosophy of the Western modernisation, instead of reinforcing the foundation of civil society, he resorted to force. Hence, in the first step he suppressed the political parties and put down tribal and regional rebellions among them the Jangal Movement in Gilan, one of the Northern provinces of Iran. Concomitant with these efforts, he "[wiped out] highway robbery, and the brigand age; ... he gathered around himself younger men of civil service and professions - many of them with modern, Western-style, educational backgrounds - who made up the emerging techno-bureaucratic elite of the country; he presented himself as an able and honest patriot to the country at large..." (Ibid.: 81).

Reza Shah's modernisation project was generally inspired by a view of the Western pattern of industrial development and therefore ideologically secular. However, to indigenise this pattern he stood for the revitalisation of the Iranian pre-Islamic heritage, which was more in line with his project than the dominant Islamic culture. Sticking to the pre-Islamic heritage was to help him to connect the greatness of the ancient Iranian empires to his kingdom and foster the myth of 2,500 years of continuous monarchy. In this way Reza Shah's modernisation project was illustrating a binary tendency, a combination of exogenous and indigenous elements. However, as a way of dealing with the indigenous aspect, he took the Islamic heritage, one of the most important pillars of the Iranian identity, out of his calculations.
As time went by these attitudes began to appear as an ideological system which needed to be propagated through an extensive propaganda system with the press at its centre. According to Mowlana (1963: 483) "A nation-wide campaign was started to hammer the national idea and ideals into the brains of people, young and old. A torrential rain of lectures, newspaper articles, magazine features, and pamphlets inundated the country. It would have been difficult to decide whether writers and lecturers or readers and listeners were bored by this monotonous repetition of the same subjects: the duties of citizens, the new tasks of women, the progress achieved, social morale, and principles of hygiene".

As the modernisation model of Reza Shah was a top down model, based on his understanding of the national and international affairs, by the same token his propaganda system was domineering. Since the press was the only modern mass communication medium at that time, and an appropriate tool for Reza Shah, very soon he applied his regulative authority to this medium. The principles of Reza Shah’s policies towards the press is summarised by Mowlana (1963:479, 483) as follows: "under the rigorous censorship of Reza Shah’s regime, freedom of thought, of speech, and of the press were suspended. Any discussion of political topics let alone criticism of the government, was unthinkable, dangerous even in private conversation...Reza Shah followed an authoritarian theory of the press, something of an imitation of the fascist ministers of propaganda".

**The Introduction of Radio and Broadcasting Policy-Making Initiatives**

The familiarity of Iranians with radio began by the broadcasting of some European radio stations, mainly broadcasts in Persian from Berlin and Ankara, in the 1930s (Mowlana, 1963: 495). At first, radio could only be received by a few receivers imported from Europe by visiting Iranians. In September 1934 the Cabinet of Ministers passed a law permitting merchants to import radio sets, and the people to install antenna after they obtained a permit from the Ministry of PTT. The Cabinet also commissioned PTT to submit a proposal for the establishment of a radio station in Tehran (Kimiachi,
The Cabinet decisions can be considered as the first broadcasting regulation in Iranian broadcasting history. In a policy sense it also meant that the government actually agreed to the listening to foreign broadcasters, the recognition of free flow of information, the importation of reception technologies, and the development of radio.

Following such a policy, in 1937 the Ministry of PTT submitted a proposal for the establishment of Iran's radio broadcasting system. The process of establishment of radio illustrates the structure and hierarchy of decision-making about the new medium. That is, at the first stage the need for such a medium was recognised by the Cabinet Ministers, then they commissioned PTT (as an expertise ministry) to prepare a proposal. However, the final approval was made by the Shah. It is worth mentioning that not only did Reza Shah approve this proposal, he also ordered the expansion of radio stations in a number of provinces. This reveals a number of facts, such as the role of the Shah in decision making beyond the official procedures, his eagerness for the expansion of radio and the role that he expected radio to play for him.

The first radio station, Radio Iran, was formally inaugurated on April 24, 1940 in Tehran by Mohammad Reza Shah, then the Crown Prince. During the inauguration ceremony, Matin Daftari, the Prime Minister, announced the first Iranian official policy of radio broadcasting. According to him radio was going to be "a source of news, information, and entertainment for the general public" (Kimiachi, 1978: 69). By the establishment of radio, Reza Shah found more chance to propagate his ideas and achieve his goals, but on August 1941, the Allies occupied Iran, and Reza Shah was sent into exile, to Mauritius, and later on to Johannesburg, where he died in 1944. Since Reza Shah only witnessed the operation of radio for one year, and did not have a chance to deal with this medium, relating any concrete and established broadcasting policy to him is groundless. However, what is certain was his determination to expand this outlet in line with his purposes, particularly for reinforcing the central state and his modernisation initiatives. This outlet especially was a useful tool for him since most of the population was illiterate and the country suffered from a lack of communication and transportation infrastructure. As for the other issues, among them the way in which he
was probably dealing with the content of radio, it must have been the same as how he
treated the newspapers; at his most generous he did not expect less than a subordinate
broadcasting system.

Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1979)

When Mohammad Reza Shah took the throne in 1941, the country was
occupied by Allied forces and faced with serious internal crises, chief among them the
issue of the oil concession for the Soviet Union, and the declaration of autonomy by
Azarbaijan and Kurdestan with Soviet support. The early years of peace, 1946-1953,
were dominated by one major political figure, Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq, who
struggled to nationalise the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and to curb the powers of the
Shah to those specified by the written constitution (Sreberny-Mohammadi &
Mohammadi 1994: 56). Since then until almost a decade after, Iran was still struggling
with dozens of foreign and domestic problems. Nationalisation of the oil industry had
become a national and international issue and had gathered the masses behind Dr.
Mossadeq. Political parties were enjoying mass support and challenging the Shah's
intention to maintain an absolute rule. Labourers, teachers, students and tradesman
were striving to maintain their unions through which they claimed their socio-political
rights. Indeed "central state weakness and ironically foreign-power intervention in Iran
allowed for this occurrence, which was not to be repeated until 1977-1979" (Ibid.: 58).
However, on the opposite camp, large estate owners, the chief commanders of army,
and high ranking bureaucrats affiliated to the court, worried about Mossadeq's plans for
land reform and their loss of privileges. The coup of 20th August 1953 against Dr.
Mossadeq's government was indeed the result of such a worry conducted by both
foreign and domestic agents. This event became a turning point in Iranian modern
history with many consequences. The most significant ones were the disruption of the
progress of national bourgeoisie, disorder in the progress of the political parties and
political participation, as well as the cutting-off of the experience of parliamentarianism
in Iran.

74
Even the suppression of the national movement had much to teach the governing body, the most important one was being the people's demands for immediate changes. Nevertheless, the early years after the coup was devoted to the restructuring of the government institutions, particularly the military and security apparatus. However, besides these developments, two other factors prevented the regime from conducting any change. Firstly, the Iranian economy was very weak and could not tolerate the expenditure and the consequences of any reform. Secondly, the internal and external allies of the regime were supporting the status quo. With the slow rise in the oil price during the 1960s and 1970s and with its dramatic rise after 1973, Iran's cash reserves grew rapidly and led to enormous investment and purchases from the West. This development paved the way for re-thinking about reform particularly since it was supported by the Shah's Western allies, mainly by the United States of America. On February 1962 under the title of "the White Revolution" the Shah officially announced a major change which inflicted an damaging blow to the position of large estate owners. The reform was indeed part of the preparation for the convergence of the Iranian economy with the international flow of capital. It released peasants from estate relations and sent them to the urban areas as a surplus labour force. It also facilitated international investment and paved the way for transferring Iranian society to a consumer society.

Though the oil revenue and flow of international capital expanded Iran's industrial base it negatively affected the indigenous industries and emptied the villages. By 1979 the position of Iran as a food-exporting country changed to an importing one. Iran's bazaars sold more foreign than locally produced goods (Welch, 1993). If merging the economy of non-western countries with capitalism means adopting a modernisation project, the 1962 reform was the true beginning of such a development in Iran. Indeed modernisation without such a convergence was begun in Iran by Amir Kabier's measures (1848-1851), but his reforms and progress for Iran did not last long. He became the victim of a conspiracy conducted by large land owners, the court and his external enemies, led by the powerful Queen-mother, who laid the ground for
his execution and buried with him his reform. The next wave of modernisation was started by the Constitutional Movement (Mashruteh) and finally failed mainly because of the extent of the forces of conservation, large land owners and the heads of powerful tribes as well as the Russian empire. With these experiences in mind, Reza Shah began his modernisation project. Although to some extent he succeed in pushing ahead a sort of "physical modernisation" (Mowlana, 1989: 38), as said earlier, because of the above design characteristics of his model and foreign intervention, his endeavour remained fruitless. The next claimant was Dr. Mohammad-e Mossadeq, but ironically, the strongest point of his project, that is, the challenge to the Shah's despotic rule for democracy and freedom and the cancellation of foreign concessions, became the weakest point of his endeavour and he suffered Amir Kabier's fate.

Mohammad Reza Shah's modernisation project actually began to operate in a different context. The country's oil richness was attracting the global market and the capitalist powers, who were eager to connect Iran to the global market, were supporting him. Although they were still present in Iran's economical and socio-political life, the forces of reaction, mainly the large estate owners, now to some extent were weakened. Plus the fact that the oil revenue was guaranteed room for manoeuvre for reform and modernisation. Above all the suppression of 1953 weakened his political opponents and therefore it immunised his modernisation project from the criticism of the opponents.

Mohammad Reza Shah's so-called modernisation spread over economic, political and social institutions and finally landed in the cultural domain. Since then different aspects of Iranian cultural life have been exposed to Western cultural patterns. Dissemination of Western cultural patterns increased the need for reliable communication and media systems. It was actually proposed to use the modern media to propagate modernisation. Although the very phenomenon of electronic media as a Western product delivers its own message, nevertheless, since 1962 onward, these outlets have undertaken a new mission. Initially, Iran's investment in Western cultural technology during the 1970s massively increased. Iranian National Radio and
Television purchased the most advanced, sophisticated equipment from Europe and North America and sent its personnel for training to leading television centres in the West. In the next stage the Westernisation of Iran began by targeting the upper class of Iranian society downward, with TV playing a leading role. However, the above mentioned development formed its own opponents across the society and formed two modes of communication. One was based on a variety of channels, including "small media" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994), traditional social networks, literature and poetry, theatre, and many other channels, while the other relied on "big media" (Ibid.). While the traditional channels were open to access and dealt with unofficial culture, the modern channels concentrated on official culture and were simply inaccessible.

The Penetration of Radio

As stated earlier, during the early days of Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, the country was struggling with different problems. Hence, dealing with radio was not a state/governmental priority. As Kimiachi (1978) demonstrates, in this period the budget of radio sharply decreased and only began to recover by the late 40s. In fact it took nearly a decade until in early 1960s before radio was financially upgraded and from early 1970s, its budget was drastically increased. Since radio from the beginning was financed by the government, the budget constraint prevented its progress. This was despite the fact that commercial advertising was also providing a substantial income. Although the expansion of radio stations depended on the government budget and therefore the oil revenue, political considerations also played a significant role. A cursory review over the established radio transmitters in terms of location shows that since 1970 there is a new trend towards the establishment of radio in frontier cities and in the areas in which the disaffected ethnic minorities were living. For example, in a deprived region such as those settled by Kurds, 6 radio stations were operating (i.e. Sanndaj, Mahabad, Qasre-Shirin, Illam, Rezaiyeh [Orumieh] and Marivan) (table 2) while many provinces in central regions did not have a provincial radio station. Also the location of new radio stations indicated the political attitude of the Shah's regime.
towards foreign messages broadcasting from the neighbouring countries inciting the Iranian people against the Shah. In this case, to neutralise the effects of these messages, for example 6 radio stations were operating in the two provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran due to being exposed to broadcasting from the former USSR radios, and 6 radio stations in the provinces near to Iraq's borders were operating with the same reasons (table 2).

Structurally, during the early stages of operation, radio was subjected to some shifts and changes in supervision. First, it was under the supervision of the PTT, then it was supervised by the Department of Publication and Propaganda (DPP), attached to the Prime Minister's Office. After that it was run by a joint supervision of the DPP and the Ministry of Labour and Propaganda. Eventually, during the 1950s the DPP independently undertook its supervision which was continued until 1963, when the DPP was re-named as the Ministry of Information. This structure continued until the National Iran Radio and Television (NIRT) was formed in 1971. NIRT was the sole government institution in charge of broadcasting in Iran until the February 1979 Revolution.

The structural developments of the early years of radio were part of the provision for the nation-wide expansion of radio and the increase in its programmes. However, as noted before, the oil revenue was playing a part in these developments. Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994) and Kimiachi (1978) have described the expansion of radio (and television) in detail. Here, what is worth mentioning from the policy perspective is the very expansion of radio, whether by stations, by its transmission power or by system, indicates the regime was single minded about the development of a broadcasting system from its early days. This was established by the expansion of electronic media as part and parcel of Mohammad Reza Shah's media policy. Since at the first stage the expansion of provincial centres was on the agenda of the former regime, it might convey a sense of decentralised policy towards this apparatus. However, defending such a claim is groundless because these centres mainly relayed the Radio Iran programmes, broadcasting from Tehran and not locally...
produced materials. Also the local programmes were under the supervision of the same regulations and policies guided from the capital, Tehran. Apart from the above noted reasons the expansion of radio stations, in the provinces and frontier cities at that time was mainly influenced by the range of transmitters which could not cover the whole country from the capital.

After its introduction radio very soon became a popular medium in Iranian society. According to Malek and Mohsenian Rad (1994: 81) "among the reasons for radio's fast popularity and growth in Iran was its entertainment potential. But probably the most important reason was the convenience of radio as a means of the government to disseminate news and information". To support this idea, they also, quoting from Tehranian et al. (1977: 258) stated that "in a country as vast and heterogeneous as Iran, radio was clearly the most effective means for reaching the people and soon became an indispensable instrument in the political struggle for power" (Malek and Mohsenian Rad, 1994). Because of this fact, radio spread faster than any other medium in Iran. For example, in 1962 there were 70 radio receivers for every 1,000 individuals, while, the number of newspapers per 1,000 did not exceed 15 (Elahi, at el. 1973:12). In 1981, there were 155 radio sets for every 1,000 population, and the ratio increased to 224 per 1,000 by 1985 (Mohsenian Rad, 1990: 504). As Malek and Mohsenian Rad (1994) estimated in 1992 there existed at least 1 radio set for each family in Iran.

When the expansion of radio was the desired objective under the Shah, the question is what sort of policies and goals were backing this approach? The Fourth National Development Plan (March 1968-1973), which was concomitant with the rise of international debates about the Development Communication, defined the overall goals of Radio Iran as follows:

(a) Publicity on national development affairs from political, social and economic aspects;

(b) The public must be informed of current events by broadcasts of both foreign and national news;

(c) National unity must be strengthened;
(d) Culture must be disseminated, and artistic talent actively fostered;
(e) The public should be encouraged to collect and maintain national and regional artistic works;
(f) Education and culture should be developed by means of a sustained educational programme;
(g) The general standard and specialised knowledge should be revised;
(h) The public should be entertained by means of musical and recreational programmes; and,
(i) Iran should be made familiar to other countries by means of foreign language broadcasts.\(^{17}\)

According to the goals listed above, the Iranian policy-makers, by giving priority to modernisation, had gone beyond the conventional way of defining media goals. This was evident while they were directly addressing national development as the first goal. Also the fostering of culture, art, and education by means of radio as the seed-bed of modernisation, had been emphasised for the first time.

**The Establishment of Television**

Unlike radio which was established, owned and operated by the government, Iran's first television system, consisting of a single network, was established as a privately owned commercial venture by Iraj Sabet Passal. Television broadcasting began to operate after the Iranian parliament (*Majles*) passed a bill in June 1958 which permitted a private company to establish a television broadcasting centre in Tehran. The station only had four kilowatts of transmission power. Later on, in early 1960, the franchisee established a second broadcasting station in Abadan with a more powerful transmitter that covered the oil rich *Khusestan* province (Kimiachi 1978)\(^{18}\).

The activity of the private channels came to an end when there was a state takeover almost a decade later, in 1971. Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994: 63-

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\(^{17}\) On this see: Katz, 1974 p. 53; Kimiachi, 1978 p. 97.

\(^{18}\) For more details see:
- National Iranian Radio and Television, NIRT (Tehran: NIRT Publication Department, 1974).
have suggested three possible reasons for this take-over. Firstly, the Shah was always fearful of the development of any potential autonomous social power that might threaten his own position. The second possible reason was the growing criticism against Bahaii influence in the Court. Since Sabet, the owner of the commercial channel, belonged to that circle, fear of the development of a separate power base by the Bahaii, especially in the control of television, could have promoted a take-over. A third possible factor was the broader shift in political mood and activities of the period of 1960-63, which signalled a turning point in the development of the bureaucratic state in Iran. According to Kimiachi (1978: 121-122) "the decision was the result of the interest of the Shah and a group of strongly patriotic intellectuals from the Plan Organisation. Most of the members of the Plan Organisation had been educated in Western countries where they were exposed to modern developments, including television broadcasting. They were convinced that television broadcasting could be well adapted to Iranian society under government control and serve to promote Iranian cultural and preserve Iranian traditions". Above all, what was certain was that, firstly, a despotic regime could not tolerate an independent broadcaster to operate, and secondly, that existing commercial television also faced financial difficulties since it could not operate economically. As Kimiachi (1978: 115-116) stresses "both the Tehran and Abadan stations were losing money and the owner of the stations on several occasions had claimed that due to the lack of advertising and financial support the stations, particularly the Abadan centre, had to reduce their daily programmes or close down the stations". Although after these remarks, with the support of people and various organisations, the stations kept operating, revenue remained one of the difficulties of commercial broadcasting. This was despite the fact that, Mowlana (1963: 611-612) quoting from the International Advertising Association (Advertising Age, November 5, 1962) reported, that "in 1959, Iran had spent $ 476,000 on TV advertising and was listed among the most popular countries where the TV's share of advertising revenue was high". Indeed, in that year, Iran's television obtained 60 per cent of the dollars spent on advertising goods and services (Ibid.).
Meanwhile, recognising the informational and political potential of television, in 1966, the Shah's government established a state-owned system as a second network. This network was inaugurated on the 20th March 1967 and named National Iranian Television (NITV). On the 21st March 1967, the Persian New Year, NITV began broadcasting (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 66). By 1971, Iraj Sabet's network was nationalised and incorporated into the state-owned Television Iran (ITV, to form a single organisation called National Iranian Radio-Television (NIRT). In addition, the American Armed Services television station, operated for several years for US personnel living in Iran, was replaced by NIRT's English language channel, serving thousands of foreigners, including the 60,000 US Army and civilian personnel stationed throughout the country (Mowlana, 1989). By any means, speedily nationalisation, or in fact governmentalisation of television by the former regime, did not allow the private sector to develop privately run broadcasting.

Broadcasting Policy Under Mohammad Reza Shah

The Structure and Hierarchy

Unlike the first stage of expansion of radio, in which the initial decisions about this medium were made by the Cabinet Ministers and only finalised by the Shah, from the early days of television Majles became the main source of policy-making. It was in June 1958 that, for the first time, Majles passed a bill permitting a private company to establish a television broadcasting centre in Tehran. The bill contained provision for the installation of one television transmitter with the necessary equipment and apparatus under the supervision and approval of the Ministry of PTT. The station, according to the bill, would operate tax-free for five years. The Ministry of PTT was to supervise the technical operation, while the programming of the station was to be under the supervision of the Department of Publication and Radio (Kimiachi, 1978: 112-113). Since then, dealing with electronic media became a routine duty of Majles ranging from submitting the related proposals and approving them, to approving the proposals, code of general policies, or article of associations submitted by the government or other
organisations. Among the salient decisions of Majles regarding broadcasting, one was the approval of the independence of NITV on June 25 1967, which gave NITV economic and administrative independence, and another was the approval of the merger of radio and television on June 23 1971. This role, that is, acting as a key player in media policy-making, continued, even increased, under the IRI, which is discussed in the next pages.

However, despite the role of Majles it should be noted that different parties were also playing a part in this domain. Here, one can formulise broadcasting policies during the Shah's reign as the products of interplay between several agents. Firstly, the very organisation of NIRT had a leading role in mapping the policies. Tehranian (1980) suggests two factors for this significance, including the relative autonomy of NIRT which by itself depended on two other factors; the fact that managing director of radio and television, Reza Ghotbi, had close political links with the throne which meant there was little need for direct state intervention; and the professional nature of broadcasting itself. Secondly and despite the assurance that the managing director of NIRT was the unofficial voice the Court, still the Shah had his own say in broadcasting policies. And thirdly, the role which was played by intelligent apparatus, including SAVAK\(^{19}\) (the Iranian Intelligence Agency). Having these issues in mind, we now turn to different aspects of broadcasting policy under the Shah.

**Development Communication**

Since the early 1970s the attention paid to the importance of communication and its potential for social change by the intelligentsia was welcomed by government officials. Initially this trend was well defined by the programming objectives of the NIRT. In Article IV of the 1971 Act which established NIRT, these objectives run as follows:

1. to assist in safeguarding, developing and propagating Iranian culture.
2. to raise the level of awareness and information of the public, and to develop arts and talents.

\(^{19}\)Sazeman-e Etella'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar.
3. to prepare the mental background for quickening the rate of growth of the country and the political development of the people.

4. to guide public opinion in the national interest.

5. to broadcast wholesome entertainment programmes. (Kimiachi, 1978: 160)

Later on this importance is mirrored by two other events. Firstly, by the high priority that the Fifth Development Plan (March 1973-March 1978) gave to communication systems through increasing its budget. Secondly, the widespread discussion between scholars and government officials concerning the role of communication in rapidly developing nations, which led to an international symposium in Iran, Mashad, in June 1975 (Mohammadi, 1975). Also "it was at this time that Stanford University was helping Iran with a feasibility study of satellite communication, not only for the development of education and health services but also for the expansion of broadcasting and telecommunication" (Mohammadi, 1997: 83).

**Media-centerism and Development Communication**

Another salient feature of media policy in the pre-revolution era, particularly since the mid-1960s, was the expansion of electronic media. The expansion policy designed to foster the regimes general aims consisted of (1) reinforcing the central state, (2) boosting the Shah's modernisation project, (3) revitalising the Iranian pre-Islamic culture and (4) binding together the greatness of the ancient Iranian empires to the new monarchy. Adoption of this policy, by the governing body, in parallel with the popularity of development communication ideas, at the first instance, placed the regime among governments that demonstrated a typical example of a media-centred pattern of media theory, where media, in comparison with society, is perceived as the main agent of change. By the expansion of electronic media the governing body aimed to boost social mobilisation and development. Within this framework, comparing the technology-determination and message-determination divisions of media policy theories, policy-makers are mainly inspired by, and working in line with, the first divisions of media-centred version, that is, prioritising technology/medium determination rather than message determination. The rapid expansion of television,
with the idea of coverage throughout the country by terrestrial means or by satellite beams, was the sign of this trend. To do this, in step with several advanced countries, Iran became one of the first users of satellite broadcasting in Asia, in 1969. Electronic media was preferred to printed media and both received more attention than the traditional channels of communication, while television shadowed the activity of radio. Indeed the governing body stressed the constraining and directing effect of "big media" on the kind of message to be carried, that is forming and maintaining the "big state".

**Hegemonic Policy**

In line with reinforcing the central state, the broadcasting system was under the particular supervision of the state authorities. Radio and television merged as soon as they were perceived as an efficient tool for the government, the headquarters based in Tehran, the director general appointed by the Shah and the organisation supported financially and politically. This kind of treatment gave another characteristic to the regime's media policy. At the first step it negated the pluralistic potential of media. Electronic media particularly was fully devoted to serve the interest of the dominant class or elites who use their influence to shape the consciousness of the majority. This reminds us of McQuail (1985: 45) description of the dominant class or elite in regard to media control, as he puts it "they are able to disseminate a view and definition of the world more or less in their own interests and omit alternative interpretations which might cast doubt on their legitimacy". Tehranian (1980: 7) described the main characteristics of this elite as follows: "For some members of this elite, particularly in evidence in the 1970s, this came to mean Southern California with all of its seductive trappings. The habits and tests, the attitudes and lifestyles, even the dreams and utopias of this elite increasingly set them sharply apart from the rest of Iranian society. The historical consciousness of this elite was this-worldly and secular, but its cultural identity was rooted in the mystification of Iran's pre-Islamic past, and the power and pre-eminence it promised". In this way, under Mohammad Reza Shah, the electronic media was illustrating the dominance version of the theoretical division of media policy. This is evident since, to use McQuail categories, it was purposive rather than
purposeless, consistent rather than random, sender-directed rather than receiver-chosen, closed rather than open (Ibid.).

**Monopoly Regime**

The monopolising of broadcasting was the result of hegemonic policy which has already described. The take-over of private television and "the merger of radio and television apparently took place in order to centralise all the [broadcasting] activities" (Kimiachi, 1978: 159), but in fact, it paved the way for an unconditional domination of the state over the broadcasting system. The very take over and adoption of monopoly strategy can be related to the increase in oil revenue since it enabled the government to run the whole industry without the need of any other parties, whether the private sector for investment or the audiences for playing a part in the securing of part of a broadcasting revenue. The oil revenue alongside the regime's political sentiment towards broadcasting and their preparation to use radio and television for rapid modernisation cleared the way for a broadcasting monopoly. These factors however guaranteed the state monopoly was far from its initial aim which was "mustering popular support for the Shah's modernisation" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994).

**Centrifugal Policy**

As stated in chapter II, McQuail (1985: 46-47) differentiates a centrifugal view of media theory whereby mass communication contributes to change, fragmentation, diversity and mobility, and in the contrary centripetal view, that mass communication is unifying, integrating, and homogenising. In searching for the characteristics of media policy under the Iranian system of monarchy regarding these divisions, it could be argued that the evidence is mainly in favour of centrifugal policy.

Although media under the Shah followed a prescription of both pre-Islamic Iranian cultural heritage and Western values, in practice it mainly worked in favour of modern, or indeed the Western culture. Following on from these facts, at the first, the broadcasting system, particularly television, began to challenge traditions and the value system of the Iranian society. This challenge, especially in the absence of political
communication, was a crucial mission for the broadcasting apparatus. Thus, broadcasting began its new mission for rapid change. This change, can be seen in the accommodation of life style, in food, in dress and social relations introduced through different programmes such as talk shows, series and so on. One outstanding example of this trend was the presence of women on radio, and then on television, in different roles: as presenters, as singers and as actresses which up to then was quite uncommon. Television particularly began making role models for different segments of the society, in McQuail's (1985) words: media brought messages of what is new, fashionable, and advanced in terms of goods, ideas, techniques, and values from cities to country and from the social top to the base. However, the ultimate aim was to establish a consumer society. Television programmes were mainly produced for the upper and middle classes and in this sense fragmented them from other social classes and strata. Indeed these strata were trained and at the same time used as a role model for the rest of the society. This pattern was flexible enough; a bank commercial, for instance, encouraged the purchase of traveller's cheques for weekend shopping in Paris and London (Tehranian, 1980). Compared with other Islamic countries, where some religious traditions were maintained in state-owned media, the Iranian media completely divorced itself from traditional Islamic tenets to build a secular state (Mowlana, 1989). The demonstration of upper and middle class lifestyles in television alongside the bombarding of audiences by tempting slogans of modern life on the one hand, and on the other, the uprooting of villagers and the bankruptcy of tradesmen due to their rapid incorporation into the international flow of capital, stimulated these strata to move in search of better material conditions. The mass immigration during the 1960s from rural to urban areas and from remote cities to the major cities, mainly to the capital, was the result of these developments. Radio and television were ironically propagating social diversification without addressing the actual diversity of the society.

**Industrial Policy**

Assessment of the Iranian media policy in the pre-revolutionary era in terms of cultural and industrial policy is difficult due to the presence of common elements of
both versions. If we consider a cultural policy "as an attempt to expand the culture of a society and maintaining it over time" (McQuail, 1985: 48), the Pahalvi's media policy can be categorised as a cultural policy only to the extent that they attempted to revitalise and maintain the Iranian pre-Islamic culture. Otherwise, considering the fact that in general, they were ignoring other parts of the Iranian culture and at the same time propagating Western culture, the application of such a title is hardly defensible. This is evident particularly, when most of the time the governing body was explicitly talking about cultural development, in the sense of promoting a Western-based culture with a secular orientation rather than preserving the traditional dominant culture. Phrase 1 of Article IV of the 1971 Act which established the NIRT, defined the programming objectives of the NIRT as "to assist in safeguarding, developing and propagating Iranian culture" (Kimiachi, 1978: 16) without any references to maintaining the traditional culture. In addition, in his inaugural address of the NITV, Mohammad Reza Shah expressed the view that television should serve as a tool for the stimulation of cultural development and for the integration, mobilisation, and motivation of the Iranian people (Ibid.: 123; Katz & Wedell 1977: 28-29).

The NIRT was also playing a dual role concerning the different dimensions of a cultural policy. In a cultural sense, media should fulfil broad public goals of general information, education and entertainment; the principle of equal rights for different regions, minorities and social groups; have a concern for moral standards and a concern for the protection of freedom of expression, as other aspects of a cultural policy (McQuail, 1985). While the NIRT fulfilled the provision of information, education and entertainment, it was very cautious in dealing with securing the principle of equal rights for different social groups and showed a lack of any concern for protecting the freedom of expression.

The same can be said for industrial policy where some contradictory elements were at work. Basically an industrial policy, as McQuail (1985: 48) quotes from Carey (1975), has at its centre the "transmission of signals or messages over distances for purposes of control" which is the same reason that all monarchy attempts to use media.
Nevertheless, an industrial policy has other dimensions, among them the wish to stimulate audio-visual industry, a general concern with job-creation and widening investment opportunities, a greater attention to financial and economic aspects of new media developments and also to matters of technical standards (Ibid.: 52). These are the points that the former regime rarely considered or at least only considered them in a particular manner. For example, while the regime's investment in the broadcasting industry was significant (Welch 1993), nevertheless, it seems it was not targeted toward economic and financial interests, or to widening investment opportunities. As evidence shows, the entire investment for broadcasting undertaken by the governmental budget was for the sake of state propaganda and push ahead its modernisation project.

These are the most strategic trends which were guiding Pahlavi broadcasting policy. However, there were also some concrete and practical policies at work for the supervision of daily broadcasting activities. Among them, to maximise the expected effects on audiences, the NIRT adopted a kind of channel and programmes diversification by initiating two entirely separate networks. These networks consisted of NIRT Program I and Program II. The First Program had a general content, the second aimed to be educational and cultural. But, Srebeny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994: 67) cite research, by Katz and Shinar, 1974, and Motamed-Nejad, 1977, that about 33 percent of First Program content and 60 percent of Second Program content was imported. It seems diversification policy was part of the modernisation package, which was intended to familiarise different segments of the audiences with the Western life-style.

Despite the amount of imported programmes in Iranian national television during the first term, the NIRT gradually shifted to an agenda of programme self-sufficiency. "After the merger of the NITV with Radio Iran in 1971, the NIRT began its television broadcasting with twenty-one hours of programmes a week. By 1974 the number of hours had gradually increased. While in 1971 approximately sixty per cent of the programmes [of program I] were of foreign origin on film and video-tape, by 1974 almost seventy per cent of the programmes were produced in the NIRT's
television headquarter in Tehran" (Kimiachi, 1978: 159). Although the home-produced programmes were not very much different, with Western formats, producing domestic content was crucial for the government because it could save them from criticism conducted by different socio-political groups, particularly traditionalists.

Regarding financial policies, radio was established as a government-initiated project and finance was provided from the public purse and advertising. Nevertheless, part of the revenue was indirectly supplied by the people. According to Article 13 of the Articles of Association of the National Iranian Radio-Television Organisation, approved by decree of the Council of Ministers issued on March 20, 1972, the NIRT’s several sources of income and credit were:

(1) proceeds from preparing and broadcasting advertisement programmes on radio and television and the granting of broadcasting and distribution rights;

(2) proceeds from the productive and commercial activities of the Organisation in the public and private sectors, and profits from affiliated organisations;

(3) revenues received from the implementation of the Law of Expansion of the Television Network;

(4) the financial assistance of the government from the state General Budget, and other funds that the government may place at the disposal of the Organisation in any other way;

(5) credits from the state Development Budget;

(6) cash or non-cash assistance from persons or bodies corporate;

(7) foreign or domestic loans in accordance with the current regulations of the country;

(8) other income that may accrue to the Organisation in accordance with other laws and regulations.20

The NIRT was also assisted by being exempt from certain national and city taxes. In conclusion there were three main sources of income for the NIRT: (1) government subsidy; (2) revenue from sales of broadcasting air time for commercial

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- NIRT, NIRT (Tehran Publication Department 1974:133-140).
advertising and (3) revenue derived from the tax on television sets in Iran according to

Compared with the whole broadcasting policy which was centralised,
advertising policy was quasi-centralised. According to the General Rules Regulating
Commercial Advertising on Radio and Television (NIRT, Commercial Bulletin, 1976:
19-23), all the human factors for the production of television and radio advertising such
as the writers, announcers, composers, fact actor, musicians, sound technicians, film
producers and other technical facilities should be supplied by the advertisers. However,
to prevent any problems the NIRT had reserved the right to accept or reject
advertisements intended for transmission, or make changes in the film or sound that it
deemed necessary. A commercial advertisement may be rejected after its broadcast if it
was considered to be in bad taste, offensive, unethical, or contrary to government
interests or policies (Kimiachi, 1978: 150). Another major feature of advertising policy
in that period, was that it was only open to domestic companies, therefore foreign
companies or advertising agencies were deprived of advertising in the NIRT. In any
case, to place advertisements on the NIRT, television and radio, advertising agencies
and sponsors must adhere to the above mentioned regulation which was passed by the
NIRT.

Following McQuail's (1985) differentiation between different policy alternatives,
one can conclude that the Pahlavi's policy toward broadcasting had the following
characteristics. In comparison between dominance and pluralist options, it represented
the dominance version, and also represented industrial rather than cultural version. On
the other hand, it was centrifugal and a negative version of the centrifugal option
compared with the centripetal option. Between the two alternative versions of society-
determined and of media-determined perspectives, the Pahlavi broadcasting policy was
media-centred, compared with its opposite option, which is society-centred, and was
exhibiting the medium/technology version of the media-centred option. In this way, as
Figure 3 shows, the whole policy was not parallel within the four cells. This not only
indicates the influence of different socio-political trends in the policy, but also, shows it is probably in the process of transition.

**Figure 3**

Mohammad Reza Shah’s broadcasting policy location based on Varieties of Media and Social Theory

Broadcasting and Broadcasting Policy Under the IRI

Immediately after the Revolution the question of controlling the broadcasting system became a political issue. Due to the populist nature of the 1978-1979 revolution which accommodated different socio-political groups, including traditional clerics, political radicals, democratic moderates, intellectuals, middle-class, merchants, and urban and rural poor, with the triumph of the Revolution, in February 1979, the participants started claiming access to the broadcasting system. However, the new governing body was able to rapidly curtail their rivals’ power, and exercise an unconditional domination over radio and television, which, until the emergence of the new communication technologies, particularly satellite, remained out of the question.

Among the first measures, the NIRT restructured and renamed itself the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic (VVIR). Then by the enactment of the

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*Seda va Seymary-e Jomhoury-e Islami.*
Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran\textsuperscript{22}, in 1979, Article 175 made the broadcasting system an independent organisation outside of any single ministry, placing it under the supervision of a council, consisting of two representatives each of the head of the Judiciary (High Judiciary Council), legislative and executive branches. The appointment and dismissal of the head of the Radio and Television (the Director General) of the Islamic Republic of Iran rests with the leader.\textsuperscript{23} Accordingly the Constitutional Law stated that the policies and the manner of managing the organisation and its supervision will be determined by law. However, as will be described in chapter VI, due to the revised and supplementary constitution, in 1989, radio and television was placed under the direct supervision of the Supreme Leader.\textsuperscript{24}

After the revolution, for a short time, radio and television succeeded in reflecting people's expectations, but this policy did not continue. Radio and television then became a state tool, and eventually began to demonstrate their differences from radio and television under the Shah (Beeman 1982). Amongst these, the ideological bases which were to dominate the broadcasting system suggested significant changes. Initially Article 175 of the Constitutional Law caused a widening of the gap between the former and the newly run system. As this Article clearly indicates "the freedom of expression and dissemination of thought in the Radio and Television of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be guaranteed to be in keeping with the Islamic criteria and the best interest of the country" (emphasis added). Here a boundary was drawn between the past and present style, the broadcasting system's content and activities under the Shah were regarded as \textit{fa'sed} (corrupt, rotten), deviant, false, conspiratorial, dependent

\textsuperscript{22}Ghanon-e Asase-ye Jomhouri-ye Islami-e Iran.

\textsuperscript{23}While Article 175 of the Constitution clearly stated that "the appointment and dismissal of the head of Radio and Television of the Islamic Republic of Iran rests with the Leader", according to Article 5 of the Article of Association of VVIR (Asasname-y Seda va Seyma-y Jomhoury-e Islami-e Iran) ratified by Majles on 19th October 1983, and endorsed by the Guardian Council of Constitution on 25th of October 1983, the appointment of the Director General of the VVIR rests with the Council of Guardianship of the VVIR. Based on Mohammad Hashemi, the former Director General of the VVIR "in that time [before the revision of the constitutional law] the Director general of the VVIR was chosen by the Council of Guardianship of the VVIR, and its prestige was lower than a deputy minister" (Sourosh, 20 Nov. 1993 no. 671). As he has elaborated, when his first term of directorship was about to finish, the Council which was combined from different factions, decided to remove him from his office by choosing another Director, but for the first and last time Ayatollah Khomaii personally intervened and retained him in his office. Since then he was re-elected several times until Ayatollah Khomaii passed away and the Constitution was revised. It should be added that probably before the enactment of the Article of Association of the VVIR, the Law of Administration of the VVIR, passed in 1980, determined the role and responsibilities of the Council of Guardianship of the VVIR.

\textsuperscript{24}The Supplementary of the Constitution.
on foreign agents, secular, Westoxinised, anti-Islamic... In contrast a significant shift in radio and television was being suggested. It was hoped to turn them into an Islamic, divine, combative, educational, tolerant, neutral...far from their former counterpart.\footnote{\textit{e.g.} see, \textit{Seda va Seyma dar Kalam-e Emam Khomaini.} Edited by Public Relation of VVIR, 1984.}
The core of this differentiation, even exaggeration, was to deny modernisation in all its aspects, but mainly its secular dimension.

Here, because of the unsuitability of the Western content and style of the entertainment programmes when judged using Islamic criteria, as the first target, they declined drastically. The new system began questioning the conventional definitions of culture, art and entertainment which had been exercised in radio and television for almost three decades. These developments were indeed part of a wider project which were going to form the new cultural policy; they "can be summarised in a single word, Islamisation" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi 1991: 38; Mowlana, 1989). In this sense, the decline of entertainment programmes along with the closing down of all advertising activities in the electronic media, and to a lesser extent in the printed media, aimed at "changing the pattern of consumption in society and establishing a culture of Islamic consumption, divorced from waste and self-gratification" (Hiro, 1985 cited in Welch, 1993: 14).

Secondly, tabligh (religious propaganda) or basically ideological themes, began to dominate on both radio and television. In a sense "radio and television in the post-revolutionary era became the continuation of [religious] traditional media such as the pulpit" (Mohammadi, 1996: 21; Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). Although, at the beginning, entertainment programmes decreased in both radio and television, still these outlets adhered to their informing and educating role. The political debates which took place during 1979-1981, between the IRI's thinkers and politico-ideological opponents, including the debates between Dr. Mohammad Beheshti and other Islamic thinkers, on one side, and the representatives of Hezb-e Tudeh (Tudeh party), the Fadaeyan-e Khaleq Organisation (a Leftist urban guerrilla group) and the Mujaheddin-e Khalq Organisation (an Islamic urban guerrilla group) on the other can be
proof for this claim, leaving aside other purposes. However, since then radio and television has devoted itself to political and religious programmes and propaganda, as well as the governing body's points of view. In fact, broadcasting religious programmes was not in question, particularly in a religious state where many people appreciated it, but the VVIR began with an excess of religious oriented programmes.

Thirdly, due to the purging of expertise, and the enforcement of new criteria, not only were production capabilities severely limited (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991), but also the quality of programmes dropped; they were neither technical nor attractive. Therefore, viewers began criticising television because of its "dull programmes" and its approach in mixing the functions of radio and television, which continued until recently (Kayhan, 16 May 1994). Meanwhile, the war imposed by Iraq, which began in 1980, kept this situation unchanged, particularly when radio and television were used as national defence and mobilisation services.

As a result of these developments, and in order to meet their information and entertainment needs, some groups of people began to shift to other options. Indeed, the specific social situation of Iran after the revolution, its economic problems, political engagements and the war, had made Iranian society hungry for information, news and, for entertainment. This was the case when the domestic media, despite their attempts, each with different reasons, could not properly fulfil these needs. Starting with news and information, there were two different situations in terms of the press and electronic media. The state's domination over the press during the time, the tradition of discrediting the press until the revolution, alongside other reasons, including low literacy and lack of reading habits among people, meant that not enough attention was paid to the domestic press by the majority of people. This situation particularly deteriorated at the closing down of all the independent and political parties' publications. The foreign press, for many reasons, including restrictions on reaching Iranian news shops, their high prices and the language barrier, was not easily available, if there was any demand. However, in comparison with the press, and in spite of the allocation of radio and television news to the views of official authorities, news
programmes in radio and television still remained unchallenged, and millions of people were informed about domestic and global events through these outlets (Mohammadi, 1995). People's concern toward news and information from the broadcasting system, however, did not prevent them having access to other broadcasters (Beeman, 1982). Therefore the number of listeners to foreign radio increased.

While access to the news and information of different sources was not too difficult, the dilemma remained with the access to entertainment material. As said earlier, due to a series of factors, such as the new cultural policy, the war, and the period of trial and error searching for a new pattern of entertainment in radio and television, entertainment programmes decreased. Once in a while, television produced some outstanding programmes including historical series such as Bu Ali Sina (the life and works of the 10th century Iranian philosopher and physician known in the West as Avecina); Mirza Taghi Khan Amir Kabir (the ideas and accomplishment of the progressive, reform-minded 19th century Prime Minister killed at the hand of a Qajar king); and Hezar Dastan (portraying urban life in Iran during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi in the 1930s). However, overall, what radio and television, particularly television, offered could rarely satisfy the people (tables 3 & 5). Nevertheless, because of the limited choice, until recently, television could keep parts of its audiences at the cost of being criticised for the lack of quality and sufficiency. This criticism, occasionally, has been propounded even by the CSRPE. For instance, a study of people's views about television entertainment programmes in the Iranian newspapers conducted by the CSRPE, in 1994, shows the VVIR was still faced with serious insufficiency regarding programme making (Table 3).

In the early 1980s, apart from radio and television, the situation for other channels of entertainment was not very good either. Theatres had mainly ceased their activities, and cinemas only had access to domestic movies which received an exhibition permit. For the rest of the time, they had to show old and repeated movies which were subject to review and had to receive renewed screening permission. Indeed in the early days of the revolution, cinema was condemned for what was widely perceived to be
support of the Pahlavi regime's Westernisation project. Traditionalists particularly accused the cinema of being an agent of cultural colonialisation of Iran by the West (Naficy, 1996). Iranian traditional music, which was on the verge of prosperity in the aftermath of the revolution, was banned in public places in June 1980 (Welch, 1993), and rarely broadcast from radio and television, hence, it is limited to cassette tape only. Popular music, which received a more negative reaction than any other kind of music, was not produced until a decade later when it found its base in exile, and that distributed by the black market. Despite the authorities' efforts to find a modest solution according to the Islamic codes of ethics, outdoor entertainment and sports, particularly for women, was subject to some restrictions. The outcome was to transfer all activities related to leisure time to private circles, with audio-visual materials at its core. In fact, the satisfaction of entertainment needs shifted to cassette tapes and VCRs, both of them controlled by the black market. The entertainment seekers fell out of the frying-pan into the fire!

By the end of the hostilities between Iran and Iraq, in the summer of 1988, the stage was set for an atmosphere of relaxed cultural policy and national reconstruction (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991), which was intensified by the election of Hashemi Rafsanjani as the president. Particularly after the Iran's acceptance of the United Nations' Security Council Resolution 598 in 1988, which put an end to the eight years of devastating war, the state authorities with relative peace of mind, prepared for new developments. The most important product of this stage was the First-Five Years Economic and Socio-cultural Development Plan (1989-1994) which was passed by Majles on February 1989. The emphasis of this plan on cultural developments immediately after the war, that is, in an era that conventionally turns to economic approaches, suggests the importance and the priority of cultural issues for the Islamic government. This plan, however, generally dealt with education of the younger generation and to a lesser extent with the promotion of public culture. It was the Second-Five Years Plan (1995-1999) that put more emphasis on public culture, searching for a suitable pattern for women's participation in cultural matters and
campaigning against "cultural invasion" etc. The preparation for the Second Plan was coincident with the penetration of foreign satellite channels which, to a significant extent, diverted the orientation of this plan towards more cultural and media attention.\textsuperscript{26}

Although communication technology has been regarded as the midwife of the Islamic Republic, for example, as Welch (1993:14) exaggerates, that "without Western technology in the form of cassette tapes the revolution might not have been possible at all", this phenomenon had its own dark side for the IRI by creating a different dilemma. Essentially, we can address three main [electronic] media crises since the early days of the Republic. First the crises of the period of establishment. This development has been best described by Mohammad Hashemi, the then Director General of the VVIR, in an interview in the internal bulletin of the Islamic Republic News Agency\textsuperscript{27} in which he focused on the chaotic situation of the VVIR from February 1979 until July-August 1981. As Hashemi put it "the situation of the VVIR in 1980, that is, when I came, looked like this: full stagnation of administrative and technical works; serious stagnation in production, particularly in \textit{Seyma} (television), there was almost no production in that time, or at least it was very low; disturbance in organisation management; disorder and lack of harmony between units, even inside units... on the other hand, the organisation became the sphere of power-struggles between political groups and factions... the financial and administrative aspects and even the appearance of the organisation was strangely unsettled and disorderly". The second crisis was marked by VCR which, from the early 1980s until 1992, travelled a long way, from prohibition to liberation. The third crisis, created by DBS, still engages the official authorities. The first and the third development will be elaborated in chapters V and VI. Here, for more insight into matters related to the IRI's cultural and audio-visual policies, I concentrate on the VCR related issues. This will not only familiarise us with the difficulties that the IRI cultural


\textsuperscript{27}This interview has been re-printed in Souroush (20 Nov. 1993 no. 671) it was titled "An Unpublished Interview with the Head of Radio and Television" (\textit{Yek Moshehb Montasher Nashodeh as Raeys-e Sazeman-e Seda va Seyma}).
and media policies generally faced, but also could help us to identify the difficulties that the IRI were confronted with in making and exercising their policy for DBS.

**The IRI's VCRs Policy: the first media crisis out of the broadcasting organisation**

VCR was introduced to the Iranian society in the second half of the 1970s. However, in the early days, it was only utilised by the government and particularly the education and broadcasting institutions. Yarandi (1994) in an article titled "At Last Video was Forbidden or not?" describes the spread of VCRs in the Iranian market as follows: the first model of VCRs which was introduced in Iran in 1978-1979 was Betamax 8080. Since then different versions of Betamax (Sony's T generation, including T6, T7, ... until T60) sold in the Iranian market. Owing to the Betamax system's technical difficulties, this system was very soon substituted by the VHS system in the producing countries. However, due to the huge investment in the Betamax project, its sale in some countries, including Middle East countries and Iran, continued. Accordingly it is estimated that about 380,000 Betamax sets, and 2,800,000 Betamax video cassettes, at the cost of Rls. 260bn, were sold in Iran. The extensive sale of VHS began in Iran from 1990, when different models were displayed in the Iranian market. It is estimated that until 1994, about Rls 970,000,000 worth of VHS videos have been sold. Meanwhile, for each year more than 3,000,000 VHS video cassettes at total cost of Rls 24bn have been bought.28

Although the spread of VCRs in Iran dates back to 1981-1986, this period witnessed the prohibition of VCR's related activities in 1983, by the MCIG, and continued by the closing down of video clubs which had two years of unrestricted activity (Sanate Tasviet, 1 May 1994). During the ban, however, the copying continued, which included American, European, Japanese and Indian movies; European, Indian and Arabic shows; shows and movies produced before the

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28On this also see: Payam-e Emrooz, no. 3 Meher-Aban 1373/ October-November 1994. On these developments, particularly the figures, also see: Video Mahvareh Magazine, no. 3 Ordibehest-e 1373/ April-May 1994, published by IVM; Film Magazine, no. 159, May-June 1994; Abrar newspaper 5 May 1994; and Iran in Aeyneh Amar (Iran in statistic Mirror) no. 11, published by Markaze- Amar-e Iran (The Iranian Census Centre).
revolution, and finally those programmes which were performed in Los Angeles by some Iranian exiled artists. Yet, due to the absence of legal channels of copying and distribution, most of the video cassettes were very poor in quality, if not useless. The original copies were imported illegally from abroad. Western copies were imported from Turkey, whereas Arabic and Indian copies were brought from UAE, Iraq, and the Afghanistan borders (Omied Weekly, no. 21, 19 Feb. 1995).

In spite of the transaction of three million video cassettes a year, in the early 1990s, (Gozaresh-e Hafteh, 16 April 1994) still some factors were stopping their further expansion. Firstly, although not all buyers used video cassettes for entertainment purposes, they hesitated to buy them due to the imposed ban. In the same manner, although the religious authorities never issued a Fatwa (opinion issued by a religious authority) against the VCR, its purchase and utilisation did not have religious legitimacy, at least between the religious applicants. Secondly, access to entertainment video cassettes was very difficult and the consumer had to join some underground networks. Because of this risky situation, on the one hand, the underground distributors preferred to deal with wealthier customers, which were limiting the number of their consumers and on the other hand, many applicants who were worried about being pursued by the government, were reluctant to contact these networks or even keep the video cassettes in their homes. Perhaps the activities of these networks within families, friends and neighbourhoods were affected by these limitations. In any case, these barriers meant the circulation of VCRs and video cassettes declined despite their extensive spread.

In 1992-1993, when DBS still was not popular in Iran, pirates seized the opportunity, and began copying satellite programmes which breathed new life into the video market. This opportunity ironically helped the pirates to improve the bad quality of video cassettes programmes! (Omied Weekly, no. 21, 19 February 1995). In this way, DBS and VCR helped each other. During the last years of the VCRs ban, when most of the black market's video programmes had been seen by people and the smugglers could not add new items, satellite programmes kept the VCR market brisk.
When it came to lifting the ban on the VCR and prohibiting satellite channels, VCRs became the carriers of satellite programmes.

Meanwhile, according to those who were closed to the audio visual market, two other factors flourished the VCR market. Firstly, using the VCR for educational purposes, particularly for learning foreign languages was fashionable and enhanced the marketability of VCRs. A package of English language lessons titled “Follow Me”, instead of a making profit for their producers and improving the users’ English language ability, boosted the VCR market. However, still there was doubt over whether buying a VCR for language improvement was real or a kind of cover up or excuse. The second factor was the introduction of the camcorder for which the VCR was needed as a supplementary tool.

The spread of satellite antenna and other developments related to the global condition, inspired by Western cultural and media technology, raised questions about the efficiency of a video ban within, and outside of, the governing body. One outstanding example of such an attitude change between the authorities was the report of Ali Larijani to the Majles claiming a policy change (Film, no. 135 December, 1992). Nevertheless, the opponents of the VCR in the governing body still strongly believed that keeping a ban on video activities could prevent access to non-permitted cassettes which was problematic, because of the piracy of foreign channels. It is worth mentioning that some moderates among the governing body also opposed the relaxation of the ban on video activities. They believed this move would affect domestic cultural products and particularly would have negative implications on the Iranian film industry, which was flourishing. The then Minster of the MCIG and his deputies defended this view by beginning a criticism of ban in 1990 (Resalat, 3 May 1990). Eventually, in January 1993, the first official permission for legalising VCR-related activities was issued by HCCR. By this order, lifting the ban on VCRs, the stage was set for the free activities of video clubs. However, beforehand, the government re-organised the IVM, affiliated to the MCIG. This organisation was actually established in early 1993 to
serve Islamic propaganda, nationally and internationally, by using visual materials.\textsuperscript{29} However the IVM's new responsibility was to feed and control video-related activities through video clubs. Legalising video-related activities prepared the atmosphere for further debates, and ironically for criticism of the VCRs ban among the authorities. At this stage, the critics of the then president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, regarded the ban as unnecessary (Soroush, 1993 no: 656).

Although it is true that by lifting the ban on VCRs, the re-organisation of the IVM and the re-starting of the video club's activities was mainly stimulated by the expansion of satellite broadcasting. Yet it is not clear whether these measures succeeded in stopping people watching satellite programmes. The relaxation of the ban on VCRs, and the continued ban on satellite reception, gave a golden opportunity to the pirates, and led satellite viewers to watch pirate videos which had been recorded according to the video pirates' tastes. Regarding this issue, during my field work, an informant argued "responsible authorities in Iran have altered the place of satellite and VCR; if there was only one choice between these two [VCR & DBS], it would have been better if they had kept the ban on VCR and allowed people to watch satellite; all the dilemmas come from VCRs rather than satellite". He then elaborated that "the pirates recently have progressed and are well organised. The quality of video cassettes has improved and their stock has increased". While the number of Ghier-e Mojaz (non-permitted) video cassettes was estimated at about three thousand titles around 1990s, it has increased to six thousand titles by 1995\textsuperscript{30}. According to a report by \textit{Omied} weekly (no. 21, 19 February 1995), "the spread of satellite antenna in Tehran and other major cities has made the video cassettes market dull, but during recent weeks (after ratification of the prohibition bill for satellite reception) the price of both VCRs and the pirate video cassette has increased, now video pirate have a very lucrative market!"

\textsuperscript{29} Jamaly, the Vice Chancellor of the Institute in an interview with \textit{Film and Cinema} monthly magazine (no: 22, 1997) defined the Institute's goals as "sending Islamic revolution message through visual means throughout the globe". Same definition was developed by Ahangary the then Chief of the Institution (Abrar, April 26, 1994).

\textsuperscript{30} This is just an estimation by those involved in this business, however a fair one.
This circumstance increased the responsibility of the IVM, despite the fact that the institute, until that time, had failed to fulfil its initial goals, that is, feeding video clubs with appropriate products. However, the institute itself was subject to some cultural and ideological restrictions. These limitations, at first, prevented the institute from having access to the domestic and global products, even to the most acceptable. While this was the case, some critics have mainly pointed to other factors, such as mismanagement and the lack of economical interests for both institute and video clubs.

On August 30, 1994, Salam newspaper in a report titled “Video still on the top of cultural problems” wrote, “The Institute of Visual Media until now has delivered one hundred and twenty video cassettes into the network and have given five copies from each title to the video clubs for Rls 8000 ($2.50) each. Considering that each cassette is rented for Rls 500 (€ 18) every twenty four hours, each cassette needs to be rented at least sixteen times to return its primary price. Because of the low quality of these cassettes after a maximum of ten times they become faulty. These kinds of problems have bankrupted the video clubs”. On the same lines, according to Cinema and Video weekly magazine (no. 13, 25 April 1995) “the video clubs were confronted with a lack of appreciation by people. The bad situation has persuaded these Bandegan-e Khoda (God's obediences- the video clubs owners) to sell other things beside the video cassettes which are rarely rented. They are selling blank cassettes, cameras, Atari's cassettes and in recent days electronic parts”. In April 1996, I personally witnessed the representative of Isfahan’s video clubs delivering a petition to Dr. Kamran MP. In that petition they had pointed to their dilemmas and had mentioned the possibility of closing down. Regarding this petition, later on, Dr. Kamran, in his interview with me, pointed out that “The Visual Media Institute has completely failed. Many interested youngsters came and joined the scheme, but the institute made them bankrupt by delivering bad service. I wish they [IVM] were just unsuccessful, they are actually incapable” (personal interview).

31 The free market equivalent in 1994: 1 US Dollar ~ RLs. 4000
To evaluate the success of the IVM one can refer to the video cassettes in circulation on August 1994, and the latest list of stock which was probably published by early 1996. Based on Salam newspaper (30 August 1994), in August 1994 the IVM's stock contained 120 video cassettes. However, according to the IVM's latest list, in early 1996, the stock had only increased to 228. This means that, after almost two years, they have added only 108 titles to the previous amount. On the available list of so-called entertainment cassettes, 50 titles (17%) were chiefly educational including: teaching the Holy Koran, Arabic language, mathematics, mechanics, photography, computing and cooking, used by particular groups. One can estimate just how far the IVM is from providing entertainment materials for video clubs and consumers. In spite of the provision of the IVM to inject at least ten Iranian and foreign movies a week into the video clubs (Cinema and Video weekly no. 13, 25 April 1995), as noted above, they had only delivered 108 items within two years, that is less than one item a week. These consisted of old and repeated movies that have been shown too many times in cinemas and on television and apparently no-one is interested in renting them. A comparison between the latest stock and slightly more than 6000 unlicensed video titles highlights the dilemmas confronting the cultural and communication policy in the country.

Dealing with this lack of progress, the critics of the IVM, once again, laid the blame on mismanagement, frequent changes of directors, and the culture of the conspicuous consumption of the institute (see, e.g., Salam, 10 July and 1 Sept. 1994). Although some of these criticisms are true, the critics have rarely paid attention to the basis of the country's cultural policies. Indeed the IVM is a unique institute in the country in terms of its access to state-of-the-art facilities and its enjoyment of sufficient personnel and experts. But in any case, access to these facilities has given high expectations to different parties, whereas the institute's output does not meet these expectations. Again, although these expectations are relevant, blaming the IVM without considering the wider context, is like thinking about fish without thinking about the sea!

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32 Perhaps accusing the institute for being luxury back to the abundance of these facilities particularly their stylish building in Northern Tehran.
The IVM can easily rely on many domestic and global sources whether they are film, music, documentary or TV serials. But the point is, that all these potentials remain useless, mainly due to the state’s anxiety about losing ideological and moral control. When this notion is dictated by the state it restrict, the IVM’s activities and affects the outcome.

By lifting the ban on video activities, after a decade of challenge, it could be expected that the authorities would have learned the lesson that the ban is not the only way to achieve “cultural immunisation”. Yet, passing a law prohibiting people's access to satellite showed that such an expectation was just a day-dream. However, despite the law being passed there were people who began questioning this legislation, because it was impractical, namely those among the government authorities, Majles representatives and some clergies. In any case, the next reaction of the IRI to the new and more sophisticated communication technologies (e.g. Internet) will show whether they are experienced enough to focus on the receiver end rather than the communication means. From this background, we turn to more the general features of the IRI broadcasting policy.

**The Structure of Broadcasting Policy-making in The Islamic Republic**

Despite the independence of the VVIR, from the beginning until the revision of the Constitution many agents including official institutions and individuals, were involved in broadcasting policy-making. Firstly, the control of the broadcasting system is inspired by the entire sublime teaching of Islam, as well as Ayatollah Khomaiini's thoughts and the Constitution of the IRI. However, the existence of these religio-political instructions does not put aside the need for modern bodies of policy-making and the control of performance. During his life, Ayatollah Khomaini, personally, instructed the policy-makers by carefully controlling the performance of radio and television and solving the religious and socio-political problems which the broadcasting system faced. Nevertheless, many of the responsibilities regarding broadcasting were undertaken by the Council of Guardianship of VVIR and Majles. As said earlier, the
WWIR Council of Guardianship consisted of the representatives of the three branches of the Constitution and some other appointees. Some of the duties and responsibilities of this council have been described in the Article of Association of the WWIR as follows. 33

1) formulating a code of general policy, the article of association, the philosophy, and objectives of the programmes of the WWIR.

2) the provision and approval of the organisational chart.

3) direct control of all programmes and activities of the WWIR according to its conformity with the approved policy.

4) determining the frameworks of programmes and the approval of projects based on the adopted policy approved by Majles, as well as, the co-ordination with the responsible authorities regarding domestic and foreign propaganda policy.

5) appointing the Director General of the WWIR for two years by a majority vote or retaining the existing one.

6) appointing the inspector (auditor).34

Until its dissolution by revision of the Constitutional Law, the council had a strong tie with the spiritual leader by taking and giving feedback. On the other hand, the council had daily based contact with the managerial board of the WWIR. The result of consultations between these parties on the basis of the Code of General Policy, Philosophy, and objectives of Programs of Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic, passed by Majles on 17/4/1361 (8 July 1982), was suggested to Majles. The outcome of Majles consultations which become law, however, must be endorsed by the Guardian Council of the Constitutional Law (GCCL), appointed by the Supreme Leader. In this way the hierarchy of policy-making for broadcasting system looks like the chart below:

33Asasnameh Seda va Seymay-e Jomhouri-ye Islami, enacted in 1983
34The Article of Association of the WWIR in total contained 15 Articles. Other Articles addressed the control of the programmes, the finance, investment, the appointment and dismissal of the high ranking authorities of the WWIR in the headquarters and provinces.
By a revised and supplementary constitution which was adopted in 1989, the supervision of the VVIR was transferred to the spiritual leader and much of the duties and authorities of the council were transferred to the head of radio and television. Yet it is not clear whether the council with diminished minor authority still, exists (Mowlana, 1989) or has been removed entirely. In any case, as the experience of forming a policy for satellite reception has showed, Majles has still kept its position as a main player in of any official decision regarding broadcasting developments. To give some examples of maintaining, and even promoting, such a role, the following measures are notable. On July 21th 1982, Majles approved the Code of General Policy, Philosophy, and Objectives of Programs of Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On 29th September 1983 the Article of Association of the VVIR was codified by Majles. Along with the revision of the constitutional law in 1989, once again Majles put its stamp on the media; by transferring the supervision of the VVIR, as an independent organisation, to the direct control of the Supreme Leader. However, one should also not forget that Majles often has to consult with statesmen and take their wishes into account.

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35 Ghanon-e Khayy-e Mashy-e Kolee va Usol-e Barnameh-e Sazaman-e Seda va Seymay-e Jomhouri-ye Islami-ye Iran
Media Centred View

As was cursorily pointed out in chapter II, the IRI media policy illustrates a media-centred trend. From the media-centred view, "the dominant forms of communication technology- and the typical message systems which are carried, are likely to serve, as they have in the past, as an independent casual factor in social change" (McQuail, 1985: 43). Here the whole perspective of Ayatollah Khomai ni about the media, which works as a charter for this organisation, clearly indicates such a tendency. Whilst being visited in Qom and Hosayniyeh Jamaran, in Tehran, by different segments of society, he was guided them by giving speeches about the issues of the day; the Islamic principles and the foundation of his political thoughts. Among the issues that captured his attention, was the role and situation, as well as the past and present, of radio and television. Later on, in 1984 (1363), it was published in a book titled "Radio and Television in Imam Khomai ni's Words. These talks emphasised the importance and the effectiveness of the media, particularly broadcasting, from a spiritual, psychic, social, ethical, cultural, political and military point of view. The key concerns of Ayatollah Khomai ni regarding the media are:

As regards to the centrality of media he believed: "if radio and television go correctly everything will be all right" (Radio and Television in Imam Khomai ni's Words, 1984: 19). In another occasion he elaborated the idea in this way:

"in the past among the main agents of fesad (decadence) was the press and cinema, radio and television. The press, cinema, radio and television all of these are to serve the country. The most important of these services is to develop our human force, and this is the duty of the press, the duty of the magazines, radio and television, the duty of cinemas and theatres. They could foster and enforce our human force and foster them rightly".
(Ibid.: 23; in a visit from Khandani'ha magazine's crew, 5 July 1979 [14/4/1358])

These remarks have been collected in a book under the title of Seda Va Seyma Dar Kalam-e Imam Khomai ni (Radio and Television in the speeches of Imam Khomai ni) published by Souroush in 1984. The book consists of two parts; the first part contains the key notes of Imam Khomai ni's speeches on different subjects. The second part is devoted to entire speeches related to different aspects of radio and television, mostly about the importance of these organisations.
Also to make the role of the dominant technology/medium in social development salient he dealt with different media and differentiated between them as follows:

"Radio and television are an effective apparatus for both fa'sed (rotten, corrupt) propaganda and the right one... so is the print the media. However, the importance of radio and television is more than any other media ... This apparatus must be such that after a couple of years it makes the nation well-informed; fosters them to be combative, reflective, independent and free-natured. It should send them out of Westoxication and give people independence".
(Ibid.: 21-22 in a visit from the Provisional Cabinet Ministers on the occasion of the Iranian new year, 20 March 1979 [29/12/1357])

In the same manner:

"Radio and television are the most sensitive media among the existing ones. Radio and television can eslah (correct) a country; as it can lead it to corruption. Radio and television propaganda, through hearing, could foster the people or destroy them".
(Ibid.: 24; in a visit from VVIR's staffs, 19 July 1979 [28/4/1358]).

While there is no limitation to the role of the dominant media he goes further and strongly issued:

"You want your country to be independent!? hereafter you should shift radio and television to be instructive"
(Ibid.: 24; in a visit from radio staffs, 21 July 1979 [30/4/1358]).

Because of his media-centred concern, Ayatollah Khomaini has clearly divided radio and television's role in terms of their pre-and post-revolutionary activities and respectively gave them the character of a devil and an angel. As he believed the broadcasting system, alongside other media of the outgoing regime, had drastically damaged the country, it was now the time to be rid of these media, to undo the old regime's treacheries. In such a sense he has argued that:

"although still there is not full control over radio and television and ... [the IRI authorities] could not arrange them as they wish, are ...[radio and television] the same as what they were in Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah's time?"
(Ibid. : 35 in a visit from different strata of people, 16 February 1980 [27/11/59]).

However, by the reconstruction and renewal of radio and television activities, he hoped that at the first stage, they could recover from the spiritual damage they had received. In a visit from the VVIR managerial board on 18 March 1980 [27/12/1360]
he gave details of many aspects of his understanding of the role of radio and television, indicating the all important place of the media in socio-political developments, including:

"...you should not consider this [radio and television] as other media. This has special circumstances since a range of audiences from two to three years old children to old men are influenced by this [medium].

You know that! from its early days, [radio and television] in Iran, more than anything else, has damaged this nation's prestige and played a role in the dependency of this nation on the superpowers. These apparatus during the son [Mohammad Reza Shah] were worse than in his father's [Reza Shah] time, and were disloyal to Iran by propagandising corruption...at that time Seyma (television) and the press and all announcers, except a few, were serving the foreigners. They [foreigners] did what they wanted, every corruption which they wanted to be exercised in Iran; one of its agents was the propaganda [network] of Seda va Seyma [radio and television]. Propagating corruption from different sides, in the press and on radio and television; showing moftazah (disgraced) movies for the destruction of the young generation; fostering the nation as consumerist by advertising foreign commodities; all these things were serving the West [Western capitalist world] and the East [the former socialist camp] and were conducted through radio and television. If, heaven forbid, this situation continued for several years more we would have rung the knell of Iran. Sometimes one word, one sentence is said on this apparatus [radio and television] which could cause a bazaar disorder (emphasised added)(Ibid.: 37).

To go further, and differentiate this trend based on media/technology or message/content determination, one can argue the IRI essentially put the emphasis on message/content rather than technology/media. One should not forget the basis of the IRI broadcasting policy revolved around tabligh (propaganda). According to Ayatollah Khomaini, "propaganda is a very important issue to the extent that one can argue the world has stood on the shoulder of propaganda". This automatically locates the policy in the message/content determination domain. Generally, in regard to broadcasting policy and performance, two factors were very important to the founder of the Islamic Republic. The first was the content of broadcasting, since it should be propagandist, and the second, the human agent. In this regard he has repeatedly

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37Radio and Television in Imam Khomaini’s words: p. 45. In a visit from the High Council of Islamic Propaganda (HCIP) on 4 February 1980 (16/11/1359).
emphasised propaganda and impatiently advised his aids to purge the loyalist and leftist personnel, and substitute them with Islamic personnel.

These words indeed formed the structure of the IRI's broadcasting policy and flowed through every aspect of radio and television performance. However, despite Ayatollah Khomaini's emphasis on other matters, such as the neutrality of the VVIR, his focus on the importance of radio and television pleased the custodians of policy-making more than any other aspect.

**Dominance/Hegemonic Trend**

The IRI's media policy is an aid to the idea of those who perceive the media as a significant instrument of dominance in a class divided society (see page: 23). The important feature of this policy in Iran, is that the broadcasting system is basically sender-directed rather than receiver-chosen, and closed rather than open. While, as a result of ever increasing differences in modern societies, "socialisation" is the top priority of most radio and television organisations, the VVIR put " politicising" at the top of its agenda and in a particular form (Mohammadi, 1996). In this particular sense, radio and television mostly expresses people's duties and responsibilities rather than their rights, as they mainly emphasise the state's relation to the masses rather than the problems which people face in communicating with the state. The VVIR's political content is directed towards justifying and propaganda functions, rather than educating and informing. In fact, the broadcasting system is dominated by the attitudes and lifestyles of a particular stratum, a tiny minority of mota'share-ein (versed in religious law), mainly related to the bazaar merchants, who use their influence to shape the consciousness of the majority (Ibid.).

**Centripetal Policy**

The centrifugal and centripetal view actually deals with the media effect, therefore these concepts essentially refer to the content. Here the question is whether the media content contributes to change, fragmentation, diversity and mobility, or is unifying, stabilising, integrating and homogenising. Put differently, while the essence
of the centrifugal view is associated with radical change, the stimulation of demands for consumption, and preparing the atmosphere for the "privatisation" of certain areas of social life, the centripetal view stresses change based on conformity and order. Here, indeed, both views are emphasizing change, but however, the extent and the depth of change are different. In this sense the centripetal view contributes to the binding together of a large-scale, differentiated society more effectively than would have been possible through older mechanisms of religious, family, or group control.38

While there is no similarity between the IRI's broadcasting policy and the centrifugal view, since it basically does not welcome consumerism and things associated with radical changes and fashion, the VVIR's content and performance give some illustrations of a centripetal policy. This feature, at first, may seem to contradict the Islamic principles of the VVIR as an old mechanism of social control. But one should not forget that the Islamic Republic as a whole does not represent traditional Islam. Here, under the world's new imperatives, particularly under the influence of government necessities, the Islamic system has kept aloof from traditional Islam. The whole concepts of *Feqh-e Puya* (dynamic jurisprudence) mean being reflective to the world's new developments. In addition, the very Islamic movement led by Ayatollah Khomaini from the beginning, was as critical of such a perception of Islam as they were opposed to the liberal understanding of Islam, literally called *Islam-e Amricaei* (an Islam or Islamic perception that is in line with Western attitudes and life-style). In the early days of revolution it was expected that the traditional Islam would dominate media content, as some factions in the governing body attempted to do so. However, the imperative of the world's new demands, the government and national interests, and the different interpretations of Ayatollah Khomaini led the system as a whole, and the broadcasting system in particular, to a more practical approach. In this way, to maintain national unity, the government included those elements of Iranian culture and life-style which are not necessarily rooted in Islam. Along the same lines, being in step with global developments, particularly those which supported government and national

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38See Chapter II.
interests, was also taken into consideration so that it worked in favour of maintaining the fabric of society, with the potential for gradual change.

**Cultural Policy**

It would be difficult to place the media policy trends of the IRI in either the industrial or cultural option. The reason as to why such a distinction is difficult, is that the IRI directs the communication system towards the maintenance of society and represents shared beliefs (i.e. cultural, or as Carey, 1975, points out a "ritual view"), while at the same time controls the transmission of signals and messages, as the indicators of an industrial policy also at work. When it comes to other components of cultural and industrial options, such as the protection of national language and cultural traditions and achievement, the IRI shows a deep concern for cultural policy. However, in accomplishing this, it is incapable of responding to the other tasks of cultural policy such as fulfilling broad public goals of general information, education, and entertainment; the principles of equal rights for different regions, minorities and social groups; a concern for the protection of freedom of expression (McQuail, 1985; Mohammadi, 1996). The IRI's policy contains some elements of industrial policy since it is generally keen to develop diversified communication networks, although mainly for the sake of government interests. In contrast, this policy is lacking the necessary qualities, which are, to stimulate the broadcasting industry independent of state control, a general concern with job-creation and widening investment opportunities, and a greater attention to the financial and economic aspects of new media developments. Here, it can be argued that, in comparison with the 1980s, in which the main characteristic of the policy was cultural, from the 1990s, some signs of an industrial approach began to appear. Nonetheless, the IRI's policy is still marked by a cultural approach. In this way, the IRI broadcasting policy location, based on the varieties of media and social theory, as McQuail 1985 has outlined, can be drawn as below:
In this chapter some dimensions of the broadcasting policies in pre-and post-revolutionary Iran are discussed. By comparing the policies, one can argue that, principally there are more resemblances between the policies than there are differences. Beginning with the similarities, both policies are media centred. In fact the Iranian political system, since the emergence of broadcasting media, has tried to take maximum advantage of these outlets to meet their aims. Mohammad Reza Shah basically put radio and television under the service of his modernisation project. The Islamic Republic, even more than its predecessor, expects that through broadcasting it will attain its end, that is, to succeed in pushing ahead the project of Islamisation. Nevertheless, despite their shared departure from the same origin, in fact, two different goals were pursued. They can be summarised in two single words, that is "secularisation" and "Islamisation" (Tehranian, 1980: 12; Mowlana, 1989). This attitude towards broadcasting however is split when it comes to the divisions of the media centred view. Here the former regime gave priority to the technology/media, whereas the Islamic Republic pays especial attention to the content of the media (see: McQuail, 1985)
Both systems used the media for exercising hegemony, therefore, they have kept the broadcasting media out of the public reach. In this sense the Iranian broadcasting system has never succeeded in representing all the segments of Iranian society, and therefore has remained far from a pluralistic approach. The monopoly of broadcasting in Iran from the early 1970s until now, proves this claim. The other similarity is that both systems have pursued the physical expansion of the broadcasting media. In this regard they have a very positive record. The Pahlavi system played a significant role in the expansion of radio and television networks, and in establishing an appropriate infrastructure. The Islamic Republic then increased this capacity by several times as much. In addition, while the NIRT has claimed self-sufficiency and freedom from foreign products, apart from its quality, it is the Islamic Republic that takes precedence of this claim and succeeds in producing of much in its air time programmes.39

Nonetheless, despite these similarities, the pre-and post-revolutionary broadcasting policies contain some major differences. Among the differences one can note, is the centrifugal trend of the Shah’s broadcasting policy and the centripetal view of the Islamic Republic’s policies. That is to say, that the broadcasting apparatus during the Shah stood as a pioneer of social change by trying to introduce the mental and behavioural patterns of Westerners to Iranian society. Consequently, some particular strata, such as the upper and middle classes chose to play an intermediary role between the elite and the rest of the society. This led to a sort of socio-structural fragmentation. While the Islamic Republic is opposed to the modernisation project and consequently the globalisation process, surprisingly they do not adhere to a fully closed policy. In fact, although they are resisting the generally Western-oriented changes, at the same time they take into consideration the imperatives of the new world system. The result of such a pragmatic solution has been made manifest in the step by step approach to change.

39 On this see:
Another difference between the two policies is that the broadcasting media in the Islamic Republic severely pursues the line of politicising the masses. Although this process revolves around the political presuppositions of the IRI, nevertheless it is not comparable with the Shah's policy, which involved keeping the masses aloof from politics. To sum up, one can say that while the Shah's broadcasting policy was the product of the modern era, the Islamic Republic's broadcasting policy runs in the post-modern time, namely in the era of globalisation. Through the broadcasting system, in fact, the Shah wanted to lead society toward modernisation, although "in the form of Westernisation" (Tehranian, 1980: 6) while the Islamic Republic's broadcasting policy follows an opposite direction. However, the difficulty for the IRI is that the very process of modernisation is now dynamically globalising, as for Robertson (1992a), globalisation repeats the tension between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft across contemporary societies, and not just within them.
Chapter V

Satellite Discourses

The present chapter focuses on the introduction of the DBS programmes and the penetration of satellite dishes in Iran. It consists of two parts. The first part is a chronological account of the course of events and contains data relating to the number of satellite dishes, the price and make of different dishes and receivers in the Iranian market, as well as the number of satellite television networks broadcasting into Iran during the period of study. The second part is devoted to the antagonists discourse about DBS between the people, the state and the religious authorities.

The Course of Events

From 1991 rumours were heard about the broadcasting of foreign television networks by satellite to Iran. But apart from a few people who had access to the correct equipment, no-one took it seriously. Perhaps the only evident sign of such a development was the futile struggle of a very few citizens who had installed a pan-lid beside or over their TV antenna from which they could receive a dim image of some international events such as the World Cup. In early 1993 suddenly the situation changed. Within a short period of time the satellite became a focal point of interest to Iranian society which continued with the installation of more dishes. In this manner, the capital and other major cities, where there were more satellite dishes, gained exposure to dozens of foreign broadcasters.

Although many factors, such as the price of reception equipment, which was not too expensive (Table 4), and the disappointment of the people with domestic radio and television (Table 5) accelerated the spread of satellite receivers, apparently none of these factors were more effective than government tolerance at first. Thus, from the beginning, a kind of correlation between supply and demand for satellite reception equipment based on government reactions was formed. Purchase and installation began slowly and then was boosted by the lack of any negative signal from the government.
An estimation of the number of satellite dishes in Iran during different stages of their spread is very difficult to make. In Tehran, the capital, the estimation of the number of dishes in 1994, ranged from 200,000 (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 28 July 1994) to 300,000 (Gozareh-e Hafteh, 16 April 1994; Salam, 25 April 1994). According to a random sampling via helicopter over the twenty districts of Tehran on May-June 1994 (before the ratification of the prohibition law) about 30,000 dishes were spotted (Bahar Weekly, 21 Feb. 1996). According to the latter-mentioned source, this number actually only covered the first six months of installation (from December 1993 to June 1994) and involved more than 40,000 families or 200,000 individuals. Regarding the fact that at that time, between 400 to 500 dishes were installed in the capital every day, Gozareh-e Hafteh (16 April 1994) claimed in 1994 only 1.5 million people in Tehran watched satellite programmes. However, the intensity of satellite installation was different depending on the population, the concentration of buildings, and the socio-economic classes living in each area (Table 6).

As Table 6 shows, five districts, that is, districts 3, 2, 1, 6 and 5 which accommodated the wealthier classes in Tehran, had installed more than 75% of all dishes installed in Tehran, whereas the other fifteen districts enjoyed only 25%. Taking aside some general reasons for the expansion of satellite dishes in Iran, such as the weakness of the electronic media and the whole entertainment industry, the swift spread of satellite dishes amongst the upper and middle classes had its own particular reasons. Firstly, a sense of separation and communication discontinuity with the rest of the world tempted them to gain access to this medium. Secondly, there was possibility of supplying a CATV service in tower blocks with all its advantages, including the cheaper price and easy connection. Thirdly, was the existence of cash in their hands. Lastly, to fill their leisure time, particularly for the younger generation of these strata. Above all, as Jahan-e Isalm (21 July 1994) pointed out, "the spread was partly related to the novelty of this phenomenon". This was by itself a good reason for the growth in

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The source did not mention where this information came from, neither did it mention the name of the organisation which had conducted the sampling. However, according to Abrar (15 March 1994) the Interior Minister announced that "satellite dishes have been photographed from the air". On this also see; Abrar 13 June and 4 October 1994).
demand, particularly when satellite channels were offering the people a great deal of choice.

In this way, while the 1980s began and continued with a VCRs crisis, the 1990s began with a satellite dilemma. In April 1990, the Asia Sat 1. Launch provided the first privately owned satellite communications network covering all of Asia. Leasing 12 transponders from Asia Sat 1, STAR TV was granted a license by the Hong Kong government in December 1990. Based in Hong Kong, STAR TV launched its free-to-air services in October 1991. At the beginning STAR TV had five channels including thematic channels of music videos (MTV), sports, news (BBC World Service Television), and family entertainment, as well as a channel of broadcasting in mandarin Chinese, all running on a 24-hour basis. With the expansion of the Chinese channel (which broadcasts programmes produced in Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, China, and elsewhere), the other four channels carry mainly Western programmes obtained thorough contractual suppliers or the international market. The BBC news channel was the only one that provided partial translation into Mandarin. The aforementioned five channels are full STAR services. Its southern beams carry an additional affiliated channel, the Z TV, a Hindi general entertainment service set up by an Indian partnership of STAR TV (Man Chan, 1994). Subsequently Mianmar, Pakistan and a movie channel was added, and MTV was replaced by V channel. At that time it was impossible to receive these channel’s signals in Iran using less than three metre dishes. Because of such a limitation, the first users of such channels were mainly foreign embassies. But in 1993, the signals of these channels were made easily accessible to 1.8 metre diameter dishes. It was only in the next stage, that is since 1994, in accordance with the increasing potential of the transponders and the decreasing size of dishes, that the temptation to buy and erect satellite dishes and other equipment increased.

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41 The satellite is owned by Hong Kong’s Hutchison Whampoa conglomerate, Britain’s Cable and Wireless, and China’s CITIC Technology Corporation. Star TV, initially a joint venture between Hutchison Whampoa and its chairman Ka-shing Li, sold 64% of its stakes to Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp.
In 1992, first Arab Sat C1, and then Arab Sat D2 covered Asian space. The first satellite had sixteen channels including: Saudi Arabia television, Channel 1; Saudi Arabia television, channel 2; MBC on S-band; MBC on C-band; Egyptian television; Moroccan television; Oman television; ASBU; Mauritania television; CNN; Kuwait television; United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) television -Dubai; U.A.E television- Abo Dahbi; CFI -France; Jordan television; and regional television. The second satellite had ten channels as follows: two channels of Future Vision, Children Art, Movie-Film-Art, Variety Art, Sport Art, and four channels were allocated to the twenty Orbit networks. All these channels were receivable in Iran via the appropriate equipment. However, the twenty Orbit networks which began broadcasting in 1994, needed a decoder. Gradually the number of channels increased with the broadcasting of two Israeli channels and eight channels of UtelSat including several Turkish channels, two Italian, one Portuguese, one Spanish and two Russian. Later on, Turk Sat channels; and since 1995, eight channels of Pan AmSat consisting of TNT, CNN, ESPN, ENT, Sony, one Indian channel, Discovery channel, Europe MTV and one commercial channel, were added to the receivable channels. To draw a brighter picture of the situation, one can add 40 channels that were being broadcast from neighbouring countries by means of terrestrial transmission. Moreover, the Orbit network has provided several radio channels for audiences. These developments meant Iranian radio and television was faced with many well equipped and experienced competitors and led to a media-cultural crisis.

With the arrival of DBS, a major difference between satellite television (SATV), that is, terrestrial based satellite, and DBS, became apparent. Unlike the old system of satellite broadcasting, DBS pictures were totally uncontrollable. From the view point of those who expected more choice and diversity, these differences were considered as a good omen. Whereas, from the point of view of the state and those who had sympathy with their ideology, culture, ethnic and national values, this was seen as a “cultural disaster” (Abrar, 31 July 1994). For a religio-political system which, for many years had criticised even the most insignificant manifestation of western culture, and which
had addressed only a few similarities between western values and the Islamic pattern of
life, and was now witnessing those patterns and values, without any limitations flowing
from these channels throughout its territory, this was hard to accept. Plus, the
country’s mass communications apparatus, particularly the VVIR, which for nearly two
decades enjoyed unchallenged domination over public opinion, were now themselves
under siege from dozens of new competitors, therefore it was difficult to react
appropriately. The arrival of DBS surprised the state authorities more than any other
segment of society. But for many reasons, they were moved to practice a passive
policy and adopt a tolerant attitude. Among the reasons, was the lack of any previous
considerations, the lack of a codified policy and most importantly, anxiety about the
repetition of the experiences following the lifting of the restriction on using VCRs after
many years prohibition.

This silence in official circles was interpreted as agreement by those who were
interested in receiving satellite signals, so they went ahead. Meanwhile certain domestic
producers had taken advantage of the plentifulness of suitable raw materials and began
producing dishes and receivers (Gozaresh 21, May 1994; Jahan-e Islam, 26 December
1994; Resalat, 26 December 1994). The low price of domestic-made dishes in
comparison with foreign samples increased the number of users (see Table 4). Therefore,
in a short time, countless different sizes of satellite dishes appeared, particularly in the north, north-west and west of Tehran. Gradually, they spread to
other cities in the remoter areas of the country.

In mid-April 1994, the Interior Minister, Mohammad Ali Besharati, fired the first
volley as a warning to the viewers. This indeed demonstrated that the period of
tolerance was over. At that time in an interview with the daily Kayhan he remarked
that:

"Within two months time, none of the dishes will be seen on the
rooftops... The campaign against satellite does not need law. It
is our duty to campaign against this problem as dealing so with
rascals and rogues" (Kayhan, 5 April 1994).
Besharati’s remarks were very important for different reasons. Firstly, he was the first person who officially drew back the curtain on a profound, cultural and communicative difficulty, a difficulty that had trapped many “South” countries and from which they were struggling to find release. Secondly, his remark brought the DBS debate from private and unofficial realms into open and official assemblies, particularly to the press, radio and television, the Majles, the cabinet, the judiciary, Friday prayer and so on. Thirdly, in spite of his lack of clarity and the rash words which he used to express his position, he was in fact the first person who officially heralded the entry of Iran into the new communication and information era. In any case, Besharati’s remarks met with a negative reaction from the government, judiciary and Majles. Here, all three forces put pressure on him to take back his remarks, they considered his announcement would encourage opportunists to enter people’s houses, using the excuse of collecting satellite dishes, and perhaps steal their property (Gozaresh-e Hafteh, 17 May 1994).

Besharati’s remarks were also the start of a puzzling debate which continued extensively. In the year ahead, particularly the second quarter of 1994, most of the papers covered the case by publishing interviews, articles, news, peoples’ points of view and caricatures. Few authorities or experts could be found who did not share their ideas about the different aspects of satellites. These pieces, in fact, created a huge literature in the domain of communication which do not have their equal in Iranian communication history. Parts of these materials were indeed the separate discourse between the people, and the internal discourses of the religious and state authorities, which will be discussed below.

**Popular Discourse**

Before proceeding it is worth defining what we mean by people. The plan to prohibit the use of satellite dishes at first was objected to by those individuals and families who had access to the satellite dishes or who planned to have access. This spectrum expanded by the addition of those who were opposed to the idea of the prohibition plan, whether they had access or not. The social characteristics of these
groups can be described generally as urban dwellers, mostly educated and belonging to the middle class and petite bourgeoisie. In contrast to this spectrum, other groups and individuals, mainly with religious or religio-political motivations, were opposed to the people’s access to DBS programmes. This spectrum was also generally urban dwelling, mostly educated and connected to the commercial and traditional petite bourgeoisie. In fact, in the case of the people discourse, the extent of religious tendency and sympathy to the political system were the two factors that were separating the two spectrum. Here, the press were not only deeply involved with the issue based on their own interests, but also, depending on their ideological and socio-political stances, they echoed these spectrums' voices. For example, the daily paper Resalat, as the voice of the merchant class, generally writes in favour of the status quo. With regard to DBS, it mainly reflected the perspectives of opposition to the DBS programmes. The daily Kayhan, addressing the interests of the “urban poor” (Kokhneshenan)\(^\text{42}\) and the merchant class, was also writing against foreign channels. Two papers, namely Salam and Jahan-e Islam, which echo the interests of that layer of traditional petite bourgeoisie who were active as part of the modern pole of capitalism, chose to adopt an in-between outlook about DBS. Others such as Ettela’at, which reflects official government points of view, mostly publishes on the technical aspects of DBS rather than becoming involved in its socio-political dimensions. Hamshahri, the voice of the middle class, in favour of DBS, while the Jomhuri-ye Islami newspaper, which mainly reflects the Supreme Leader’s point of view stood against DBS. During the course of events, two opposing papers, Hamshahri and Resalat, have published hundreds of items relating to the different aspects of satellites, but although one cannot find a piece of writing against satellites in Hamshahri, neither can one find a piece in favour of satellites in Resalat.

With these issues in mind, I now turn to the most repeated issues in satellite discourse among people as they have been published in the Iranian press. These generally include, (a) the question of technology, (b) the question of regulation, (c) the

\[^{42}\] Literally, those who live in very poor accommodation, generally as opposed to Kakhneshinan, those who live in palaces.
The Question of Technology

The technology of DBS and the internationalisation of broadcasting amazed different segments of the society, and led them to an extensive discourse based on their different positions. This debate increased in intensity as the spread of satellite dishes increased. Initially, anticipating the news about the government's decision to collect dishes, attention was paid to the potential of the new communication technology, to escape any government threats. The concern about the size of the dishes and their conceal-ability stood as the main issue. Here, those in favour of DBS hoped that the new devices could make the endeavours of the opposition useless, but also used the knowledge of technological innovation to try and convince the opposition that the results of their endeavours would be futile. On the other hand, the opposition, who were anxious about the consequences of such developments, became more severe in their search for some kind of countermeasure to avoid this end. Through the contact of these two perceptions and wishes, the question of technology was raised and became one of the issues of satellite discourse. As the first move, the opponents of DBS focused on the feasibility of preventing satellite signals by means of technology. This is usually the way for those civilisations that basically try to maintain the existing equilibrium. They strongly react to any new innovation and thoughts that, potentially can shake the environmental balance (Needham, 1984). Perhaps, the reason of the lack of enough momentum to improve the results of their self-control mechanism, which for many centuries has guaranteed the equilibrium of these societies. Thus, it is no wonder that, as their first reaction to DBS, the opposition began thinking about technical countermeasures, including satellite jamming. On the 9th May 1994, the Resalat newspaper published an article written by an engineer named Mehrabi Bayan, who claimed that technical measures against satellites by means of satellite jamming was feasible. Four months later, a group of electronic engineers, headed by the above-
mentioned engineer in a letter to the Speaker of the parliament, Hujjat al-Islam Ali Akbar Nategh Noori, repeated this claim and announced their readiness for action (Resalat, 19 Sept. 1994). They announced that "some of our friends are now working on a project that employs a technical solution to the problem of unwanted satellite signals". They added "the progress is satisfactory and the hope is to finalise the project within a minimum budget" (Ibid.).

Perhaps because of the huge expenses of such project, the claim was criticised by the Jahan-e Islam paper on 29 September 1994. According to this paper, “this claim that it is feasible to prevent Iranian viewers from watching foreign television does not seem realistic except to impose more expenditure on the government and society. This is especially the case when many experts believe that the technology of satellite is developing”. However, the paper added that “if a plan like this is really applicable, it is preferable to law-making against the reception of satellite signals”. These sorts of claims and reactions were far removed from the understanding of the new technological developments by the advocates of DBS. According to them, the speed of change within communication technologies, particularly satellites, is too fast to prevent it, whether by technical means or regulatory measures. They were arguing that the models of dishes will be changed in the near future, due to the increasing power of transponders and this will result in a smaller size of antenna. In addition, in the next couple of years, not only will the size of the dishes decrease, it would be even possible for viewers to gain access to the satellite programmes using televisions with built-in antennae (Kar va Kargar, 22 April 1994), not to mention some conceal-able antenna such as "curtain antennas". Moreover, nowadays television is not the only outlet to capture foreign images; computers are also capable of transmitting television.

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3 "Proof of God" a title once given only to a small number of top rank Islamic scholars. The first to receive the title was (Al- Ghazzali). Today it is a title for any mullah whether or not mujtahid. (Fisher & Abedi 1990)

4 According to rumours they eventually exercised this possibility in the north-west of Tehran, that is in Shahrak-e Gharb (Western Suburb) and in Saadat Abad where the percentage of erected dishes was higher than in any other district.

4 During the course of debates, some technical terms and phrase became very popular, amongst them "curtain antenna". Although this model has never been seen in Iran. The interesting thing was the usage of the phrase. The pro-DBS reception people used it mostly as a threatening tool and to convince the opposition that preventing people who wanted to gain access to satellite programmes would be a futile reaction. The opposition used the phrase to put pressure on the whole governing body to secure the necessary regulations.
programmes. Therefore instead of “physical reaction” and fighting against satellite antenna, it is better to know it and take advantages, of it (Abrar, 21 April 1994). Apart from the real intentions of the participant in the discourse, these kinds of arguments illustrate how the new developments in the media sphere have increased people's technical knowledge. People are becoming very up-to-date about the new version of any outlet and the convergence of different media.

Because of the overreaction of the opposition, the advocates of DBS put them in a defensive position by accusing them of being opposed to science and technology. At this stage, by dividing technology from its contents, the opposition launched a new course of debates regarding the consequences of the new technologies (Resalat, 16 May 1994). In the opposition's view, what was making these consequences significant was the passivity, even fragility, of the audiences. Thus "because people are not self-controlled in watching these severely corrupt programmes, they should be controlled (Jomhuri-ye Islami 8 June 1994). However, the advocates put this question, what makes Iranian audiences different from those who are watching satellite programmes in other countries? Here the opposition laid stress on the dissatisfaction of the westerners with satellite programmes to emphasise their own disagreement with satellite broadcasting. Popular among the points stressed was the reaction of the Pope, the bishop of Rome, as head of the Roman Catholic Church, warning about the erosion of western societies by exposure to those “corrupt programmes” (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 19 April and 8 June 1994). In any case, unlike those in favour of DBS, who mainly emphasised the audiences' active role, those against DBS put stress on the means of communication. Even in the cases when the opposition pointed to the fragility of audiences they still believed that the programmes or satellite channels, or rather, their content, should be controlled rather than having direct communication with the audiences. According to the opponents of DBS, if satellites were not in the hands of "corrupted powers" and if they were not broadcasting corrupt programmes it would be possible to tolerate their programmes, but since the situation is far from that ideal

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*Again this phrase soon after the debate began, became very popular. The main usage of the phrase was to cover both legal and technical measures, even strong arms methods.*
The Question of Effects and Audience Behaviour.

By separating technology and its contents, the discussion changed to the areas of "effects" and "audience behaviour". At this stage the press published several articles reflecting the anti-DBS stances, categorising the socio-political and ideological threats of DBS. As regards politics, they believed that basically a very well designed conspiracy is going on against all of the Third World countries and in particular against the Islamic Republic by means of satellites, (Gozaresh-e Film, May-June 94; Resalat, 1 August & 17 July 1994). This view involved looking at satellite broadcasting as a form of new colonialism; with the intention of dominating the nations culture and erode national and ethical unity (Gozaresh-e Film May-June 94). Ideologically, according to the opposition, the continued watching of satellite programmes could gradually erode the basis of religious thought. In this sense, Mehrpish-e, a student, in a letter to Jomhuri-ye Islami (8 June 1994) wrote “satellite is the flag of Satan on the roof of ideology". Later on, satellite broadcasting was perceived “as an owl on the roof of the so-called global village" (Resalat, 8 August 1994; Ettela'at, 19 July 1994). However, as they were propagating, the efforts of colonialism are not limited only to culture, the other aims are to conquer markets through the advertising of western commodities (Jahan-e Islam, 12 July & 12 August 1994). As to the social effects of DBS, the opponents were pointing to the contradictory effects of DBS for the Iranian viewers. In this sense, they remarked that while according to the Islamic criteria, for example, students at school do not see even a single one of their women teachers' hairs, in the home they are watching “outrageous lifestyles" through foreign programmes, if they have access (Gozaresh-e Film, May-June, 1994). This was to emphasise the reality of the present day Iranian society and the opposite role which is played by DBS.

In response to these arguments, the advocates of DBS began to complain about the way in which attention was only paid to the negative aspects of satellite programmes (Jahan-e Islam, 21 July 1994). According to an article in Hafteh Nama-ye Cinema (4
May 1994), "merely because of phenomena having negative aspects they should not be dismissed. The best way is to teach people how to use these facilities". As they perceived, the harmful aspects should not lead us to set aside these outlets with all their beauties. If video or satellite have negative implications we should think about how to remove the negative aspects (Abrar, 17 and 21 April 1994; Cinema weekly, 4 May 1994). This perception went further by questioning the whole concept of 'cultural invasion' by means of satellite. "What is said about satellite working as a tool of 'cultural invasion' is not entirely correct. Presupposing that the satellite is the product of a very well designed conspiracy with a view to "cultural invasion" is not a correct presumption" (Hafteh Name-y Cinema, 8 June 1994). Instead "satellite programmes give people a correct and clear view about the world and what is happening on the other side of their borders. The negative aspects depend upon people and the ways that they are watching satellite programmes" (Gozarest Film, May-June 94). This sentiment was clearly echoed by an unnamed critic in an article, in response to Javad Larijani's points of view about satellite programmes47, titled "Mr Larijani! Satellite self-evidently is not Satan and evil".48 In this piece of writing, amongst other issues, the critic said "We should not forget that we are living in a global family. Based on our rich cultural background we should interact with other members of this family. The world needs us as we need the world, satellite is a window to see the world surrounding us" (Gozarest-e Hafteh, 7 May 1994).

Unlike the opponents of DBS, the advocates did not believe in the passivity of audiences watching satellite programmes. To emphasis this perception, the advocates continued their discourse by using the themes which were propagated by the state media. Since the revolution, the Iranian ruling elite, through the media, has always accused the former regime of using mass communication to bring corrupt western culture into the country. However, to emphasise the religiosity of the Iranian people, they have argued that because of the people's Islamic beliefs, attempts to import western culture have been futile. With this in mind, the advocates of DBS have

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47 On this, see the authorities' discourse in the present chapter.
48 Aghay-e Larijani! Mahvareh be Khodey-ye Khod Shaytan va Shar neyst.
counter-argued that "just as the former regime’s corrupt television could not mislead the Islamic nation of Iran, not even the most corrupted satellite channel would ever succeed in their mission", (Ettela’at, 17&24 May 1994; Gozaresh-e Hafeh, 16 April 1994).

In the same manner, the advocates reasoned that since Iranian family structure is basically traditionalist, whether through religion or traditional Iranian culture, families are the best controllers of the satellite usage. In their view, Iranian families rarely let their children watch unsuitable programmes. This sentiment was reinforced by arguments that the Iranian culture is too rich and too strong to fall before invader cultures. Even by exaggerating and by mixing time and space and different historical events, they tried to support the people’s cultural strength. For instance, they pointed to the Mogul attack on Iran during the thirteenth century and argued "just as the Moguls dominated Iran; they came as a victorious tribe but soon after dissolved into Iranian culture, thus our culture has nothing to fear from satellite" (Gozaresh-e Film, April-May 1994; Ettela’at, 23 May 1994).

As a current example they point to those who live in the southern parts of the country, on the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Oman sea, who for many years have been exposed to neighbouring TV programmes. As the advocates put it, "not only did they not change, but also, foreign programmes are no longer special for them and they even prefer domestic programmes because they broadcast familiar issues and subjects" (Salam, 19 April; 26 May 1994). They have also mentioned some examples from other countries’ experiences. Among these propaganda subjects, one was the case of Yugoslavia. The Iranian state run media have argued that after forty years of domination of communism in Yugoslavia and their anti-religious propaganda, religion, especially Islam, is still alive. In Egypt, in spite of dozens of “corrupt” western channels and Egyptian channels which are mostly the same as the western ones, the number of women wearing the Hijab (Muslim women’s dress code the veil, modest dress) is increasing. Former actresses have repented and the society is more eager to accept Islamic values and behaviour (Kayhan, 2 July 1994). In Turkey, Algeria and Tunisia, in spite of being directed to the west, the propagation of secularism and a
"corrupt" media, Islam is going through a revival (Salam, 29 September and 5 October 1994). Here again, the advocates borrowed the examples above, propagated by the state's media, to show if the media in other contexts, could succeed in encouraging people to desist from their religion. In this way, Iranian religion and culture remains safe

**Prohibition Law**

Another axis of people's discourse revolved around prohibition law. This is one of the contradictions of the age of information and communication. While deregulation has become one of the most important messages of the new age, at the same time questions are being raised about the necessity for regulation. These are mainly due to the increasing number of outlets, the global abandonment of control over the media industry during the last decades, easy access to media products and the internationalisation of broadcasting. In any case, although the first thoughts of regulation were initiated by the government, the passing of the prohibition law is indebted to the pressure of the opposition and their newspapers. Here with regards to the opposition, some points should be considered. Although Islam has formed the most important part of the foundation of Iranian identity, when giving their views, some people are more motivated by Iranian traditions, customs and rituals than by the religious. The norms and values produced by this group lays special emphasis on morality, which consists of many 'go' and 'no go' areas in social relations. Therefore, distinguishing these group from those who were opposed to the satellite programmes for religious reasons, from the outset, is necessary. Also, one should differentiate between the religious groups in opposition to satellite programmes. Some of these groups were motivated only by religion, whereas others have first political, and then religious motivations. It was the second group, who are politically orientated, which appeared as a pressure group to put a ban on satellite reception, and they have remained active in monitoring satellite-related issues after the ban.

Regarding the consequences of DBS and the necessity of enacting a law, each segment of the opposition had its own concern. The first group, namely those who
adhere to Iranian traditions, was, for example, concerned about the erosion of the Iranian identity including language, customs, rituals and values. The first group of the religious opposition was more worried about the erosion of the religious identity, the breakdown of family relations, the decline of morality, and so on. The second group, or the religio-political group, in addition to the first group’s concerns, was also anxious about the political implications of satellite. They thought if the religious and traditional structure of society is damaged, the political structure would be affected as well. It could be suggested that this group has reacted more than any other group against DBS.

Given these positions, codifying and implementing the law was profoundly debated across the country. Considering that it took more than a year before the authorities broke their silence and ordered the collection of satellite dishes, the first reaction of the opposition was to complain about the absence of any regulations. They forced the government to make its position clear in favour of preventing satellite signals (*Resalat*, 2 May 1994). Meanwhile, the advocates of DBS emphasised the historical necessities for satellite as a technological phenomenon and believed codifying the law works like closing the eye to these necessities (*Kar va Kargar*, 26 April 1994; *Ettela'at* 23 May 1994; *Abrar*, 21 April 1994; *Cinema Weekly*, 4 May 1994; *Gozaresh Film*, May - Jun. 1994). They were repeatedly reminded of former experiences, including the VCR ban49 and argued that as regulations could not prevent people having access to VCRs and video cassettes, placing a ban on satellite reception would be useless (*Jahane-ye Islam*, 15 May 1994; *Cinema Weekly*, 4 May 1994; *Omied Weekly*, 18 June 1994). Particularly, they put emphasis on the difficulties of implementing the law. Concerning Iranian carelessness with regard to the law and regulations, they argued that enforcing the law would need more disciplinary forces without necessarily having any positive results. Also taking into consideration the Iranian psychology in which, when prohibited from something, they become greedier,50 they concluded that the law could result in more feeling in favour of satellite programmes and encourage people to watch.

49 This experience became an icon for the advocates and later on was used by the opposition to express their ideals against satellite programmes.
50 This remark was also backed by an Arabic axiom which is very famous in Iran, it says “Humans become greedier, the more things are prohibited.
In addition, the prohibition bill could result in people hiding the antenna (Jahan-e Islam 15 May 1994). Moreover, a ban on satellite reception could only geographically cover the central parts of the country. The advocates of satellite argue that, "those living in remote areas, near the borders could easily gain access to programmes broadcast or rebroadcast by neighbouring countries" (Gozaresh-e Hafteh, no. 51 April 1994). Thus the new regulations would have only limited effects. Indeed the supporters were not worried themselves about the further spread of satellite dishes as a result of any restriction, or anxious about the limited effects of a ban, but they tried to influence the opposition’s approach to satellite reception.

When it became evident that, in any case, the plan would be approved, the advocates of DBS began to raise other questions. For example, they raised the issue that “every decision about satellite is related to the next generation as well. Since we do not have the right to decide on behalf of them, we should be more cautious about our decisions” (Jahan-e Islam, 21 July 1994). In this regard, earlier the Ettela’at newspaper published an article titled "Satellite and the death of moral values in so-called progressive countries" written by Khoei asking for a referendum. He suggested that “as it is customary in some other countries, it would be better if we also approached this decision the same way” (Ettela’at, 30 April 1994).

While the opposing groups were heatedly debating the satellite issue, a tiny minority of people negated the whole story based on a conspiracy theory. In their view there was no problem with satellite at all, “the truth is, the state is magnifying the story to cover people’s economic difficulties” (Salam, 25 May 1994). Others address the subject in this way, that “satellite affairs will gradually be forgotten and those who can afford it will began to watch again and the state will also gradually come to terms with the issue” (Tahmashay Zendegy, April 1994).

As said earlier, in the opposition camp the satellite was seen as the tool of "cultural invasion". The basis of this perception dates back to the conspiracy theory which has a long history in Iranian modern history. The latter concept mostly

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1 Mahvareh va Marg-e Arzesha-ye Akhlaghi dar Keshvarha-ye be-s-telah Motaraghi
demonstrates how the open and hidden hands of the foreign powers and their vast political, economic and even religious organisations intervene in the fate of nations. Belief in the conspiracy theory brings peace of mind for the believers, and psychologically helps them to make accusations and lay the blame on the foreigners’ shoulders, for example, laying the blame for political, economic and social backwardness on colonialism (Ashraf, 1995). "Cultural invasion" can be accounted for by the application of conspiracy theory to the cultural domain. This is because of firstly, the ruling elite’s concern about the cultural issues; secondly, the increase in global cultural products which they perceive as a danger for indigenous culture, and thirdly, the absence of adequate media products in the country.

From this angle, and regarding the fact that their attempts to technically prevent satellite access were far reaching, the opposition launched their campaign in favour of a satellite ban. In contrast to the pro-DBS group, who believed the bill would make the people greedy to gain access, they were reasoning that “the soul of the bill could decrease demand for foreign channels” (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 26 April 1994). In their view, “although some people use these facilities secretly, the very need to use them in secret reduced the spread of satellite dishes” (Ettela’at, 21 July 1994). Accordingly “the lesson which should be learned from lifting the ban on VCRs shows how these kinds of relaxation could bring disaster” (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 26 April 1994). This position was, at the same time, a reaction to the pro-DBS group and the neutral position of the Rafsanjani administration at the particular time of tension, when the disciplinary guard had discovered 200 unlicensed video cassettes in licensed video clubs in Qom, the most important religious city of Iran. The opposition regarded it as the consequences of “cultural liberalism”, which included the lifting of the ban on VCRs by the government. The news was perceived as shocking; Jomhuri-ye Islami, (26 April 1994) wrote “This event did not happen in a border city or in a secular country, it has happened in Qom, that is, in the religious heartland of the country”. When the opposition strongly committed itself to encouraging the state towards a prohibition law, the advocates of DBS raised the question about the right of individuals to decide according to their
interests. As they put it, “supposing that all programmes are corrupt, it will be the viewers choice to decide what is right and wrong and nothing to do with the state”.[R]

The opposition's response was, “the Islamic state has a duty to defend spiritual boundaries as well. In addition, they reasoned that “the Islamic Republic nowadays has an additional duty as the vanguard of religious thought in the world, so it should be the first to prohibit” (Jahan-e Islam, 13 June 1994; Resalat, 2 August 1994). Since any restrictive reaction to DBS was perceived worthless by the experts the opposition argued that, those specialists who argue that preventing satellite programmes is futile, either do not understand the depth of the disaster or are addicted to those corrupt programmes” (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 21 April 1994). Although, in a passive reaction, some opponents admitted that the country is now left behind in the acceleration of global developments and technological progress, and does not have any effective way to prevent the “international conspiracy against Islam and Muslims”. They were insisting that "satellite as a tool of corrupted power should be banned" (Resalat, 1 August 1994). Later on, these polemics switched to action, for example, the associations of Islamic students and pupils issued statements condemning the use of satellite equipment and asking for a ban on satellites (Salam; Kayhan, 7 June 1994; Resalat, 25 July 1994).

**The Question of Domestic Television**

Since the beginning of the satellite debates, the national radio and television became the focal point of rival groups. By providing quality programmes the opponents of DBS wished not only to lure people back to domestic channels but also to stop the critics. And vice-versa, those in favour of DBS pointed to the weaknesses of radio and television to show how they were fed up with the programmes and determined to watch foreign channels (Omied Weekly, 24 April 1994). Initially, by connecting the growth of the viewers of satellite programmes to the weakness of the VVIR, the critics put the blame on the shoulder of this apparatus. Dr. Ghafari, a university lecturer in an interview with Kayhan, stated that “taking into consideration people’s foreign language difficulties, indeed nothing attracts viewers [to the foreign
channels], but some things are repelling them and that is our television programmes” (17 May 1994). The aversion of people to domestic radio and television mostly stemmed from the programmes and sometimes their technical limitations. For example, people frequently complained about the sad programmes (Tables 3 & 5), about movies which did not have anything to say, but which had been shown many times (Ettela'at, 30 May 1994; Bazaar-e Rowz, 6 June 1994). And because of these, they concluded that “with these sorts of programmes no policy could succeed” (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 30 May 1994). According to a report by Gozaresh-e Film some interviewees argued “we do not agree with DBS but if domestic television follows the status quo, undoubtedly people will prefer to watch VCRs and satellite” (May-June 1994). However, domestic television was not the only cause which indirectly encouraged people to watch foreign programmes. Radio was also blamed for many reasons, including frequency difficulties. In this sense Salam (30 May 1994) published a letter from a reader who complained that “if gaining access to FM radio in Tehran is difficult, how could the authorities expect people to stop watching satellite channels?”.

Despite such criticisms, the main difficulties remained with the VVIR’s programmes, its policy and the ambiguities which dominated this apparatus. In this regard, a Talabeh (scholar of religious science) wrote “fifteen years after the revolution, contradictions still remain among those responsible for cultural and ideological affairs, especially about matters such as hearing women’s voices, the limits on fixing the eye of women, religious permission for certain types of music and programmes” (Omied Weekly, 23 May 1994).

Apart from the two rival groups, noted above, there was also an ‘in-between’ outlook regarding DBS programmes. This perspective suggested taking expert advice rather than leaving the issue either to general public or to political factions (Kar va Kargar, 26 April 1994). It agreed with satellite programmes but warned about its negative implications such as the domination of global industrial powers (Hafteh Nama-ye Cinema, 4 May 1994). It was concerned about the implications of satellite programmes on some social groups, particularly children, and asked for some sort of
rational control (Ibid.). In terms of access, they were searching for a limited access whether via DBS or re-broadcasting of DBS programmes by the VVIR. A young reader from Gonbad-e Kavous, a northern city of Iran, wrote to the Salam newspaper suggesting his generation would be happy if they could have limited access to satellite programmes. As he put it, "we are not asking for totally free access, rather, as the government has regulated access to the VCR, the same can be done for a limited access to the satellite programmes" (Salam, 24 May 1994). Others sought for recording and re-broadcasting of some suitable programmes by VVIR (Salam, 6 June 1994). As regard to the law, indeed they were in favour of regulated access, because they believed that in this way people and authorities know their responsibilities. These kinds of demands were especially boosted by the Orumiyeh accident. Based on Jahan-e Islam (3 May 1994) on 24 April 1994, disciplinary forces without a search warrant had entered a merchant's house. This had frightened his little girl, who was confined to bed. They then confiscated some equipment and arrested the merchant. However, the court released him due to the absence of any appropriate law.

Solutions

Regarding the above mentioned deadlock, the two camps were suggesting different solutions, although not as different as their understanding of the issue. From the opposition's point of view, there were three solutions for dealing with the new situation. They consisted of:

(a) A solution based on religious beliefs. As they put, it the best way for the "vaccination" of people against foreign satellite programmes is to strengthen people's religious consciousness and convince them that satellite programmes are harmful.

(b) Making some legal barriers to stop the increase of satellite's viewers,

(c) Reinforcing the cultural potential of the country (Kayhan, 26 April 1994).

Also a similar suggestion had put the solution in this way:

(a) Feqh-he (jurisprudence) reaction.

(b) Political, scientific and legal reaction to control the situation.

(c) Educational reaction (Ettela'at, 16 May 1994).
While the opposition solutions were very general, the advocates' suggestions were more specific and practical. As a solution, the advocates were emphasising promoting theatres, movies and cinemas, radio and television (Abrar, 27 April 1994). In this point, they preferred to leave the issue to specialists because "an unprofessional point of view could not solve the problems" (Abrar, 25 April 1994). As they put it "the country should follow the experiences of some other countries such as India, which are taking advantage of these outlets to broadcast their thoughts and receive others' perspectives (Jahan-a Islam, 28 April 1994).

The Summary of the People's Discourse

The above mentioned discourses and suggestions can be classified into the following categories. The opposition counted satellite programmes as the instrument of 'cultural invasion' and believed that the country should challenge the issue by all means, including codification of law, disciplinary forces, and cultural commitment. They thought these endeavours could build a strong dam to prevent people receiving satellite images. In contrast, the pro-DBS group believed that physical and legal prevention is worthless, particularly when cultural instruments are at issue. Instead, in the first instance, people should be informed and then be free to choose. This is to say that they were putting emphasis on the receiver end rather than the means of communication. According to this outlook, people could enjoy the glory of these technologies and at the same time stay safe from harm. They basically dismissed the whole idea of prevention and believed that national consciousness along with media abundance, as well as the increase of domestic cultural products, could immunise people to the extent that they can have access to any means of communication, including watching satellite programmes, without paying a big price for it. Moreover, they thought that in a natural process people would react against the misleading influence of programmes. They were also seeking a somewhat modest regulation involving the participation of the public, government and specialists. These are some of the main categories of people's discourse. I now turn to the discourse of the state authorities to see how they looked at the issue.
State Authorities' Discourse

It was almost 10 months from the Interior Minister's reaction to the use of satellite dishes on April 5th 1994 until "the plan for prohibition of the utilisation of satellite reception equipment" was ratified by Majles on 1 January 1995. During this time, in addition to the people, the state authorities became engaged in satellite discourse and formulated their own arguments for and against DBS. Altogether satellite discourse among the authorities was the result of interplay between three streams. The first group were close to the moderate faction which crystallised in Hashemi Rafsanjani's administration. The second stream was called the traditional faction, which indeed is a coalition of the commercial bourgeoisie and the "urban poor". Finally, the high ranking clergy is the third group, which backed the traditional faction in the process. Based on evidence, which will be presented here, the first faction had the potential to be tolerant of foreign satellite channels. They actually preferred to leave the issue to individuals to find a solution by themselves. However, due to it being difficult to defending satellite programmes, and considering the Islamic code of ethics, they could not defend their points of view in public, and in an effective way. In the present Iranian society the official acceptance of any new plan or any new phenomena as a whole depends on having enough religious and political legitimacy. Solving the problem of legitimacy needs backing by some reliable references such as the Koran. In addition, to apply new developments, they need to have enough political legitimacy, despite the fact that in Iran, politics and religion are very inter-related. But political legitimacy does not equate with religious legitimacy. To defend satellite programmes at the first stage, one should demonstrate that their programmes do not contradict the "sublime teaching of Islam" (religious legitimacy), and in the next stage one should prove that it does not disturb the political system. Also in a political sense, they should demonstrate that programmes broadcast inside the country cause no harm for society.

In contrast to the first group, the traditionalist faction took advantage of the incompatibility of some DBS programmes with the Islamic criteria, and dismissed the idea of utilising satellite programmes. To the extent that where the issue is between
satellite programmes and religion, defending those programmes was very difficult. This is because only exceptional programmes could gain the above mentioned legitimacy. Thus the lack of acceptable programmes boosted the position of traditionalists. However this camp had their own problems. The most important one was that they could not suggest any alternative to foreign satellite programmes. Added to this problem, paradoxically, was the weakness of domestic radio and television and the whole cultural apparatus. Since the two main cultural apparatus i.e. the radio and television, and the MCIG were run by the ministers who were sympathetic to this camp, they could not be blame them for their weak performance. Plus, the advance of communication technologies and the globalisation of communication had made their position indefensible. In any case, to overcome the situation firstly they convinced the high ranking clergy to issue a *Fatwa* against watching foreign satellite programmes and secondly persuaded the Majles to ban the use of satellite reception equipment.

In such an atmosphere, as a rule, the government should intervene with a view to managing the new situation. But, as well as the above mentioned barriers, other problems were preventing the government from doing so. The important one was the conservatives’ expectation to hear negative responses from the Rafsanjani administration about the people who installed dishes were waiting for a free and legal access. Whilst the government did not have such an intention, even they were in favour of some kind of regulated access. Nevertheless, the government remained silent regarding foreign satellite channels. Hence the struggle with satellite broadcasting became one of President Hashemi Rafsanjani’s administrative difficulties, and at the same time, a test to put cultural reform into force.

The above noted developments, particularly the Interior Minister, Besharati’s, reaction against the use of satellite dishes and the reaction of the governing body to his remarks, were the starting point of the authority's DBS discourse. The negative reaction of the government to the Interior Minister's remarks occurred mainly because he did not consult the cabinet beforehand and his remarks put the moderate position of the administration in danger. While the government reaction to Besharati was predictable
because of the latter mentioned reason, and the fact that politically he was not in step with the whole body of Rafsanjani’s administration, the question was why the Majles did not welcome his remarks. Here we must say that the majority of the fourth Majles had been formed by the coalition of the so-called traditional faction. Besharati was in line with this faction, so it was expected that they would support him instead of criticising him. Here, one can mention two premises. Firstly, the coalition by emphasising law and order were trying to transfer the case from the government to Majles and then through more reliable regulation obtain the desired result. The ground for this endeavour was the experience of VCRs, which had been regulated by the government, but the regulations were never taken seriously. The second premise was that, at that time, the conservatives did not have a clear understanding about the issue until Mohammad Javad Larijani, the most popular thinker of the faction, wrote several articles about the issue and decisively dismissed the idea of tolerance. The course of events showed that the second premise is more reliable than the first one. In any case, due to pressure from all branches of the constitution, after several days, the Interior Minister in an interview with the Tehran Times, changed his position and said Satellite reception is not illegal, but to gain access to it, one needs to get a licence. Since then the discourse about satellite between the authorities began, which will be described below.

The advocates of satellite reception, who were silent until Besharati’s remarks, turned to legalism as their first reaction. As we will see later, they were compelled to take that stand without having a real intention towards regulation in the sense of banning access. This was indeed a sort of counterattack to Besharati’s remarks who was then denied the force of law and regulation for collecting satellite dishes. In addition, in that period of time, there was no appropriate regulation to put it in force, therefore, taking an indirect route would help them to maintain their position. Above all, they were hoping to influence the quality of law with a view to regulating the reception rather than banning it.
Considering that Hashemi’s administration on the whole preferred to leave the issue, the first reaction came through those Majles representatives who were advocating satellite reception by leaving the issue to the people. Ghasem-e Sho'leh Saddi the representative of Shiraz, said, several days after Besharati’s remarks “interfacing with the new phenomena needs a law, since there is not such a regulation at the present time, it can be assumed to be legal. Therefore collecting satellite dishes using disciplinary forces is against the law” (Abrar, 18 April 1994). Also, a week later Zadsar, the representative of Jieroft, put it that “collecting satellite dishes is wrong ...Majles is in favour of regulating based upon taking advantage of satellite (Salam, 25 April 1994).

Since, in such an atmosphere of support, denying free access was difficult the first strategy of the opposition was to manoeuvre over the positive and negative functions of DBS. However, gradually they put emphasis on its negative functions. This, on the one hand, was to assure those who utilised DBS for their business that the opposition was aware of their concern, and therefore they would be exempt from any regulations concerning the prohibition of DBS access. And on the other hand, it was to publicise the negative aspects of satellite programmes for the general public. This strategy was mainly propagated by Dr Kamran, the representative of Isfahan. Owing to his geographical knowledge, he had a good understanding of the different uses of satellite particularly in the areas of remote sensing and outer space laws. In addition, he was a member of the Commission of Islamic Guidance and Art (CIGA) in the Majles, which dealt with cultural affairs. In one of his first interviews, Dr Kamran commented that “There is no limitation for the utilising of satellite by scholars and researchers, it just needs to be regulated, but utilising the negative aspects of these communication devices such as watching immodest movies is not right. There should be a law for this aspect (Abrar, 18 April 1994).

The first and last remarks of the President about satellite affairs were addressed to a meeting with the students of Amir Kabier university. When a student asked: “When satellite dishes occupy Muslim houses, how can one talk about the exportation of revolution? In reply the President remarked that: “The existence of dishes is not in contradiction with the diffusion of cultural revolution. It is up to people to accept or not accept this (Abrar 1 June 1994).
Meanwhile, a small group of representatives questioned the need for regulation from the Right. According to this tiny minority, the existing laws would be enough to prevent the reception of satellite programmes, therefore there was no need for new regulations. Mawalizadeh, the representative of Ahwaz, remarked "I am not against the satellite itself, I am opposed to its programmes. If it advocates corruption, we have a law for that"... at the moment there is no need to pass a new law by Majles" (Salam, 25 April 1994). However, apart from such a position, by now almost all groups were agreed about the necessity of regulation, although with different intentions. Soon the course of events showed that the opposition was more serious in following their objectives than the advocates, who did not have sufficient desire to pursue their claim.

In the meantime, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance criticised the government's position by saying that "it is necessary for the government to take a stand against satellite programmes (Etella'at, 4 May 1994). He added that "the primary study of policies has been finished in the MCIG, but the next steps which are the duties of the HCCR and the government have not yet been started (Ibid.). This remark clearly shows the reluctance of the government to act. When the plan was submitted to the Majles on 11 May 1994, it still had an ambiguous status in the government's plans. (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 12 May 1994).

In the Iranian parliamentary system law-making is based on bills and plans. The bills are supplied by government and submitted to the Majles to be approved, whereas the plans are suggested by the representatives of the Majles. Usually because the bills contain the forecasting and securing of expected expenditures, they are preferred to the plans, but in some cases, including this one, the Majles overtook the government. By chance, later on, when the plan was approved by Majles and went to The Guardian Council for endorsement, this body did not confirm the plan, because of the lack of anticipation of the expenditure needed for its enactment. In any case, the question of law and regulation officially became the central focus of the authorities. From now on, the whole governing body was divided between the two major camps as regards DBS.

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53 e.g. "the law of special manner for the punishment of those who are active in the area of unlicensed audio-visual activities" (Law passed on February 1994).
By the submission of the prohibition plan, those in favour of DBS, who were mostly representatives of the Majles, took a very firm position against any legal measure. Dr Ansari, the representative of Mashhad, remarked that "It is impossible to get results from any physical interface... having satellite dishes is not a crime... one should move toward its dissemination" (Abrar, 21 April 1994). Other representatives went further and pointed to the damage which would result from any restriction. Amongst this damage, would be the millions of US dollars which had gone into buying satellite reception equipment during the last two to three years of the spread of satellite broadcasting. Indeed they were not exaggerating, according to a report on Gozaresh Monthly (no. 39 April/May 1994) "the Americans had estimated that the Iranian market has the potential to buy more than $6 billion of satellite equipment. Given that this is the case, then domestic factories could manufacture the same products as they produced for the Iranian PTT and VVIR". As the report pointed out, only a factory in Mashhad can produce 10,000 dishes a day. Putting aside these kind of figures, what was evident was that, until that time, more than half a billion dollars had been spent on dishes alone. Accordingly, as the advocates of DBS believed, passing regulations and placing different restrictions on satellite-related activities would lead to a deterioration in the situation and damage domestic products. Therefore, alternatively, it could result in attempts to gain access to smaller and more hide able antennas which, per se, cause the loss of more currency. Subsequently, during the parliamentary proceedings Ahmmad Moradi the representative of Torghabe-h, remarked "The ban does not solve any problems, it creates some new problems. It is feared that a huge amount of currency will be lost through the (illegal) importation of new versions of satellite antenna (Hamshahri, 21 Sept. 1994). He added "There is no problem with satellite in the country and we have exaggerated the case; the problem of our society is high costs, not satellite... How can we satisfy ourselves and control people's behaviour, but leave the bazaar to do whatever they like" (Ibid.). Some of the representatives even exaggerated the harmlessness of video and satellite. Paknejad, the representative of Yazd, in an interview with Alborz Weekly Magazine on 21 July 1994, said that "nations whose
culture is artificial, feared satellite and video. Since we have a rich culture there is no room to fear satellite”. By such an argument, the pro-DBS representatives switched to a radical stand as the opposition took a contrary, extreme position, i.e. DBS was regarded as anti-national and anti-Islamic. Nevertheless, they compromised the situation to build an environment for negotiations. Mohammadi Far, one of the opponents of the prohibition bill, said in the marathon discussion, “The majority of programmes are not harmful and they are the same as the movies which are broadcast on our television. It would be better if we warned people about those undesirable programmes” (Hamshahri, 21 Sept. 1994). Related to this, one of the Hamadan’s representatives remarked that “One should teach people to benefit from satellite’s useful programmes (Abrar, 18 April 1994).

Due to the delay on approving the plan by Majles, the press conducted interviews with MPs and other authorities about different aspects of the plan and the exact time for the Majles’ approval. But the outcome of these interviews could not satisfy the whole spectrum of opposition. The delay on approving the plan by the Majles had several reasons. Firstly, the issue had not been justified enough for the representatives. Secondly, they especially had doubts about technological changes and their consequences. Indeed, it was thought that if it was true that the new, small and hide able dishes would come to the market very soon, there would be little point in passing the law. Lastly, most of the MPs had doubts about the feasibility of exercising the law, taking into consideration the disagreement of the government.

To Justify the case for the Majles representatives and the intelligentsia, Dr Mohammad Javad Larijani MP, a member of the foreign policy commission, began writing articles in the press and lecturing in intellectual circles. At the same time the Research Centre of the Majles (RCM) headed by Larijani, conducted a study about other Asian countries’ approaches in response to DBS (Majles & Pajouresh no. 11 Shahrivar 73/ August-Sept. 1994). Later, the results of the research were circulated between the MPs. The stand and points of view of Dr Larijani himself were more

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54 in Persian, Markaz-e Pajohesh-ha-ye Majles-e Shora-ye Islami.
effective for conservatives than the former study, since his ideas contained both strategy and tactics for facing the new developments. Initially, he attacked those critics who had targeted the Iranian clergy for standing against some advanced communication technologies, such as the gramophone, photography, loud speakers, radio, in the recent past, and in recent years, television and other outlets. As a second strategy, he tried to involve the high ranking clergy in the satellite debates. To reach this aim he gently criticised the scholars of Qom Theological School because of their delay in investigating the satellite issue and in publishing their point of view (*fatwa*) (*Resalat*, 3 May 1994).

Then, he chose several axes of debate. Basically, he focused attention strictly on those who believed that because of advanced technologies, passing a law would be futile. In the next stage, he began to enumerate the potential cultural, psychological and intelligence losses caused by DBS. Probably due to his critics, in mid May 1994, Ayatollah Araki, the religious authority of the Shi‘ites, and three others of the Theological School of Qom, in response to an *Estefia* (seeking advice on legal or religious matters from an Ayatollah) about utilising satellite programmes, issued their *Fatavi* (pl. *fatwa*) and as a result, utilising satellite became *Haram* (prohibited) (*Kayhan*, 22 May 1994). Considering the role and function of a *fatwa* for Shi‘ites, it affected many authorities’ points of view, amongst them those who were advocating utilising satellite programmes.

Details of these *Fatavi* will be given in the next pages of this chapter. Here the point is, these *Fatavi* were stiffening the position of conservatives by moving the abstainers to the conservative camp and making the opponents doubtful. After the *Ulama*’s *Fatavi*, Dr Larijani continued his interviews and his publishing with the intention of changing the environment in favour of prohibition, until the plan became law. Because of the amount of criticism of any state intervention regarding DBS, he raised the question that: “Should the state intervene in this case? and responded clearly that:

"in my view nobody should have any doubt about it, because the state, in an Islamic system, is not just a gendarme facing robbery and murder, but it also has responsibility for combat against false thoughts and guarantees the health of the
society. This is the reason why Valley (Guardian) has two kinds of Vellayat (Guardianship). One is Vellayat Amr which gives him power and then Vellayat Ershad (Guidance).55 What can the state do? As the first step, it should inform the people about the problems and issues. In the second place, conduct useful laws and regulations. Perhaps nobody questions the guiding projects which are proposed and supported by the state. However there is doubt whether the state could, if it is advisable, put a ban on the utilisation of satellite programmes by people? Concerning the legal fitness of the state to apply such a measure, there is no ambiguity in the constitution. Even in democratic systems which are based on liberalism and they basically think the state should be neutral about (values), the issue of public modesty is exceptional. This is why in some states of America establishing gambling-houses, bawdy-houses, and, to an extent, nakedness is prohibited, or a man can not be married at the same time to several women and vice versa. Some just do not advise prohibition by the state, despite the absence of any legal difficulties. Their theorem has two central points: firstly, the fact that this makes people more greedy, and the second that the government could not exercise the law. In my view neither of these is justifiable. The fact that (legal prohibition increases public avidity) is simply a misunderstanding of public psychology. Why should we perceive that people want to violate the law? Of course, I accept that the sacredness of law in our country is not too high, which manifests the weakness of civilisation... To talk about the impossibility of state control on the exercising of the law, there is doubt about both the premise and the syllogism! If the difficulty of enforcing the law could prevent the enacting of a prohibition mandate, then this should also prevent the state passing any mandate about drinking wine (Islam prohibited drinking alcohol), adultery, debauchery and venality (Resalat, 23 May 1994).

The Fatavi and Larijani’s remarks changed the atmosphere dominating official circles, and mostly Parliament. This purified the position of the two camps. Some MPs, including Sadr, the representative from Tehran, Zadsar of Jierofit and Ghanavati of Behbahan, clearly changed their positions in favour of the ban. In the new position Ghanavati remarked that “just because of technology one can not be careless about dangers which threaten values” (Resalat, 19 Sept. 1994). Meanwhile, since mid August, 1994, the collection of satellite dishes in Tehran and some other cities such as Mashhad, had begun (Salam, 21 August 1994). In Tehran, collecting dishes actually began in July 1994, when the prohibition plan was still in process. When disciplinary forces denied any involvement in incidents, the Office of Campaign Against Evils56

55 Possibly he meant legislative and God-given Guardianship
56 Edareh-e Mobarezeh be Monkarat
which is responsible for these kinds of measures, claimed that they had search warrants from the Prosecutor (Salam, 26 July 1994).

Subsequently Ayatollah Hassan Janati, the secretary of the Guardian Council and the director of "the headquarters of directing others to do what is laid down by religious law"\(^5\), who was very straightforward in expressing his ideas, announced that "the Islamic system in reacting to satellite should be serious and take measures" Resalat, 27 July 1994). Several days later, in the Friday prayer ceremony, he added "satellite dishes by propagating the manifestation of shahvatrani (voluptuousness) and donyaparasti (worldliness) can beat on the body of the 'revolution of values'". As the Abrar paper noted, his remark was supported by slogans against America and in favour of Islamic values. He continued that "satellite, by destroying incorporeal values, cost the world" (Abrar, 31 July 1994).

In this way, satellite became one of the focal points of Friday prayer. Since the Friday prayer is a place for taking unofficial votes from those masses who strongly support the state, it was expected that very soon the Majles would come to a decision. In this way, in the days ahead, Ayatollah Imami Kashani in the Friday Prayer of 12 August 1994, remarked that "Satellite is a tool for incursion against the Prophet, the Holy book, the Koran, and the absent pontiff. By this instrument the enemy tried to make the country be'dard (careless), be'fekr (thoughtless), be'eradeh (lacking in determination), and kill (destroy) human sentiment in individuals (Resalat, August 13, 1994). On September 18 1994, Majles began the process of the plan (Etella'at, 18 Sept. 1994).

**Majles Marathon**

After the necessary initiatives for passing the law, the opposition was anxious about the required vote. They still worried about their rivals' reactions and particularly the abstentions. In addition, based on past experiences, it was difficult to predict MPs' votes, especially when voting is secret. Here, to stimulate the representatives, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, who was attending the Parliament remarked

\(^{5}\text{Setad-e Amer-e ba Marouf va nahy-e as Monker}\)
that "now we are faced with a particular circumstance in the country, which is similar to the beginning of the imposed war (by Iraq) in which parts of our provinces of Khozestan, Kordestan and Kermanshah had been occupied. If the plan receives a weak vote, it will suggest a particular meaning to society." Thus concerning its political importance we should have an appropriate stand in voting and one should not be worried about our opposition friend's criticisms" (Etella'at, 21 Sept. 1994). Dr Mawalizadeh, the representative of Ahwaz, pointing to the Fatavi of eleven Ayatollahs against watching satellite programmes, asked for a vote in favour of prohibition (Ibid.). Movahedi Kermani, another advocate of a prohibition law, stated that "concerning the Supreme Leader's task, the Fatavi of Maraje (pl. Marja, "source of imitation", a supreme Usuli jurist whom the common Shi'ite folk follow) and the perspective of Umate Hizbullah (the religious community as the member of God party), the Majles vote will demonstrate the harmony with, and obedience to, the Supreme Leader. I am afraid that if this plan is not passed, later on the supreme leader will do it by himself" (Ibid.). Moreover, at the end of the session, the speaker of the Majles said: On Saturday some MPs asked for a secret ballot whereas today they took back their request, therefore voting will be by open ballot, (Ibid.). In the language of diplomacy it showed how important passing the law was for the opposition.

On the whole what was discussed during the Majles debates was mostly former issues. Those in favour of the prohibition law emphasised the erosion of values, the breakdown of families, culture, religion, sovereignty, and worries about cultural imperialism. Their rivals pointed to the impossibility of preventing satellite signals, the tolerability of most satellite programmes, the weakness of domestic television and so on... In any case, the general point of the plan attracted the majority of the present members of the Majles (Resalat, 21 Sept. 1994). However, Ghanavati, the member of

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58 Perhaps parts of the governing body agree with satellite programmes.
59 The name of Ayate Ezam who had issued Fatwa were: Ayatollah al uzma Araki, Ayatollah Javadi Amole, Ayatollah Makaram Shirazi, Ayatollah Mazaheri, Ayatollah Fazel-a Lankarani, Ayatollah Sobhani, Ayatollah Moamen, Ayatollah Yazdi, Ayatollah Imami Kashani, Ayatollah Janati, Ayatollah Ameni.

61 On this see: Iranian newspapers published on September 19-21, 1994.
the Islamic Guidance and Art Commission, in an interview after the vote, remarked that "even the members of the Islamic Guidance and Art Commission do not believe that this move could prevent satellite reception. What they wanted to do is to give a chance to the authorities to lay the foundation for appropriate planning by investment in technical and human resources with a view to managing the situation (Hamshahri, 22 Sept. 1994).

After the plan was read for the first time, and the second reading began, 70 of the Majles representatives asked for the suspension of the plan. Sadiqi, the representative of Bonab, and one of the proposers, stated that "the present plan is not comprehensive" and emphasised that "the government agreed with suspending the plan until a perfect plan could be submitted to the Majles" (Hamshahri, 12 Dec. 1994). This suggestion was not welcomed by the advocates of the law. Bahonar, the representative of Tehran, put his disagreement in this way, "it [the law] will determine the duties of people and governmental authorities" (Ibid.).

Since the new law could damage the communication industry, issues were raised by Abasi, the representative of Bandar Abbas, with a view to killing off that part of Article 1 which forbids the manufacturing of satellite dishes. This point was supported by the PTT Minister who shared the belief that the plan should not prevent the progress of technology. This suggestion was very important for the Ministry of PTT particularly, because one of its companies namely the Telecommunication Company is manufactured satellite equipment, and had made outstanding technological progress. In this point, the representatives endorsed the suggestion.

The issue which cast a shadow over the second reading was the disagreement between the MCIG, which, during the debate, was named the ministry of the "Cultural", and the Ministry of PTT, which in turn was labelled the ministry of the "Technical". The MCIG believed that the whole concept of satellite was a cultural debate and therefore it should be treated like publications (book and press), and movies. In contrast, the PTT looked at the case as a technical issue. The presence of Gharazi, the PTT Minister, as the government delegate in the Majles was the sign of the
agreement of the government with such a view, that is, as a technical issue, and this
annoyed the opposition. *Resalat* the mouthpiece of the conservatives, wrote, under the
title 'Choosing a Technical Minister for the Investigation of Satellite Cultural Debates',
"it is surprising that the representative of the government is a technical minister and
looks at the commission’s approvals from the technical dimension and argues from a
technical angle" (2 January 1995). The challenge between the two ministries was
clearly indicated by the contradiction between the economic and cultural perspectives on
the communication industry. In fact, this global phenomenon touched Iranian
communication policy and became a serious issue. For example, when the
government’s representative, the PTT Minister, demanded the authority to issue
licences to official users, his suggestion was dismissed by the opposition. Instead,
Article 7 of the prohibition plan, which gives this right to the MCIG, remained intact
and became law. However because of the insistence of the "technical" position in the
final draft, harmonising with the PTT and Ministry of Intelligence was included. In this
way, each vote for every article of the prohibition law was a matter of dispute between
these two perspectives, namely the "cultural" and the "technical".

As stated at the beginning, the opposition, particularly some representatives of
*Majles*, indicated that, when the law was ratified, the rights of the ‘physical person’
would be reserved. Since the promise had not even been indicated in the plan’s first
draft, the issue was raised again during the *Majles* debates, but it did not gain any
attention. The *Resalat* paper by anticipating the suggestion, described it as a dangerous
point and wrote "The suggestion to give license to the ‘physical person’ is going to be
put forward by some MPs; it is rooted in disagreement between the Ministry of PTT

Article 3 of the prohibition plan recommended reporting the agents of importation
and distribution of satellite reception equipment to the revolutionary courts, which were
involved in investigating political rebellions and anti-intelligence cases. To soften the
law, the opponents of the plan suggested that part of Article 3 should be transferred to
the competent judicial authorities. This was accepted.
On 1st January 1995 Majles approved the plan. Two days after, the plan's supporters changed their mind and asked for the removal of Article 12 in which it was indicated that the law would be exercised for only three years (Appendix 2). This article was suspended (Kayhan, 4 January 1995). Then Majles sent the approved plan to the Guardian Council for endorsement. Meanwhile, a new approach in dealing with satellite antenna began by having a reconnaissance helicopter over Tehran\(^2\) (Kayhan, 1 January 1995). Also Besharati announced that they were ready to collect dishes (Kara va Kargar, 3 January, 1995). However, they were encouraging people to surrender the dishes themselves rather than leaving it to disciplinary agents. This policy became the backbone of the government's approach to the satellite dishes.

On 11 January 1995, Kayhan quoted from the Guardian Council that the plan had returned to the Majles for some clarification and improvements. According to the Guardian Council, Articles 2 and 3 would increase public expenditure.\(^3\) In addition, they pointed to Complement (b) of Article 9 and emphasised that all funds received should be paid into the Treasury and the expenditure should be based on approved credits.

Due to the legal responsibilities of the VVIR and the MCIG, the VVIR director announced that "50 to 60 satellite channels are being monitored by the VVIR and we are negotiating with their companies for provision of copyright" (Hamshahri, 11 January 1995).

After the Majles revision of the Complement (b) and other articles on 12 February 1995 (Official Journal, no. 14468, 6 March 1995), the Guardian Council endorsed the law on 15 February 1995 (Kayhan 16 February 1995). On 29 March 1995, the Council of Ministers, based on Article 11 of the prohibition law, approved an executive regulation and conveyed it to the Interior Minster and the MCIG to be passed.

Following the ratification of the law and the expiration of the deadline for collecting satellite dishes, the issue was raised of the right of dish owners to keep disconnected dishes. Paradoxically, according to the Interior Minister, "keeping these

\(^2\) Probably it was the second reconnaissance.
\(^3\) For these and other articles see Appendix 1 & 2.
dishes is not against the law, only the utilisation of dishes has been prohibited" (Salam, 18 April 1995). Whilst the advocates of the ban had a different interpretations; they thought no-one should have the right to keep their satellite dish, even if it was unused. Nabavi MP emphasised this interpretation of the prohibition law by claiming that "the position of the Interior Minister is against the law" (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 24 April 1995).

In any case, this issue remained ambiguous.

Once the law was endorsed by the Guardian Council, the heat went out of the debate rapidly. The press rarely addressed the issue, and the opposition was simply flattered by the law. People’s demand and use of satellite also apparently dropped, but did not cease. As people were trying to avoid any confrontation resulting from the new law, they became cunning in their attempts to conceal dishes from disciplinary agents and neighbours. Despite the importance of the prohibition law, it was the Iranian broadcasting system itself which received the most attention and was given a boost.

To summarise, one may say that, based on Articles 2 and 3 of the prohibition law the Interior Ministry and related authorities became responsible for collecting satellite reception equipment. The new law did not make any reference to other reception equipment such as receivers. Perhaps, as this equipment is inside the houses and therefore sophisticated legal processes, such as a warrant from the prosecuting attorney, were needed, paved the way for this neglect. Surprisingly, during the debates, whether inside or outside the Majles, nobody pointed to ‘uplink’ and other transmitters’ equipment. Now was wonder whether transmitting signals were allowed or not. Article 3 also called for the participation of the Ministry of Intelligence in preventing the importation and distribution of satellite reception equipment. This indicates that the issue is more important for the opposition than it seemed at the beginning. It can be added that the law in general, and especially Article 8, and Complement (a) of Article 9, prevent the progress of the media industry. Nevertheless, despite other articles, what is significant is the responsibility of the VVIR and the MCIG to select and record some satellite programmes and offer those programmes to people through television, cinema and video clubs. These two authorities were licensed to use satellite programmes in a
productive way, which shows the former perception, that saw satellite programmes as satanic and evil, has changed. However, the question of which programmes are suitable and productive remains unanswered. The new law, alongside other measures, including increasing the budgets of the VVIR and MCIG, have made more opportunities for these authorities to deal with the new situation. In this new situation, the only measure which could help them to manage competition is to revise the bases of cultural and media policy, with the view to relying on people's cultural needs and national values as well as the necessities of global change. Without actively engaging people, the chance of gaining any degree of success in the new communication order would be very difficult. The IRI's points about the destructive 'effects' of satellite are agreed on by many people and governments all over the world, but the 'effect' is not in dispute. What is important is the question of policy, government control of the media and the best way of dealing with international broadcasting; a policy and solution that, as Siune et al. (1986) put, could find a reasonable balance between 'forces of change' and 'forces of preservation'.

Religious Discourse

While the reaction of high ranking clerics to satellite developments stemmed partly from a sense of empathy with the political system, they are part and parcel of it. This also showed religion's own particular concerns about the globalisation of communication. However, their reaction began only when they were asked by the political authorities to guide people in regard to DBS. If this is the case, it can be argued that the long term experience of the religious authorities in challenging new communication outlets had turned to a non-interventionist position, which was activated again by the political system. Nevertheless, when their reaction began they did not leave out any of their socio-political and religious concerns, and declared the conventional prescription of deterrence.

Initially the statesmen were mainly concerned about the threat of satellite programmes on religious values. Not surprisingly the clergymen did not hid their
concerns about the implications of the internationalisation of broadcasting for the political system. That is to say, where the authorities put religion as the source of legitimacy of the political system, the main body of clergymen took into account the supporting political system as the patron of religion.

The intervention of the religious authorities can be seen in the light of convergence between religion and politics. Here, the traditional religious institutions such as fatwa; Ahkam-e Sanaveyah (second decrees issued by Mujtahids); the semi-traditional, semi-modern institutions like Majles-a Khobregan (Assembly of Experts) and Shoray-e Negahban (Guardian Council) not only control and evaluate the circulation of religion in politics, but they also considered objective necessities with the view of bridging the gap between those necessities and religious principals.

I have discussed the main concerns of the state authorities regarding satellite issues. Here the discussion continues with the religious discourse about the new communication technologies in general, and the DBS in particular. This may bring out the differences between the political and the religious points of view regarding the issue and the major concerns of religion in facing new global communication developments.

When the DBS debate reached a certain level of intensity, those against DBS raised the issue of referring to mujtahid(s) (a jurist qualified to express independent opinion) as a valid reference, to further their own approach. This was an area that the pro-DBS advocates did not like to be involved with, perhaps because of the dominant role of the opposition in this area and the fact that most of the mujtahid(s) had negative views on satellite programmes. In contrast, the traditional faction, by taking advantage of its hegemony, especially by relying on “Jamea-y Rohaniat-e Mobarez” (combatant clerical society) the most important religious organisation in the time being described, propagated the issue beyond the social, cultural, political, economic and technical boundaries to the religious domain. Around mid May 1994, Ayatollah Araki and three other scholars of the Qom Theological School, that is, ayat-e eazam [honourable Ayatollah(s)] Azari-e Qomi, Moemen and Amini received the estefta (seeking advice on a religious matter) below to give their fatwa.
"The installation of satellite dishes in an attempt to watch foreign television programmes has what kind of *hukm* (religious judgement)? Taking into account that (a) most of the programmes, particularly movies, circulate *fesad* (immorality) and *fahsha* (obscene acts) and show *a' amale jency* (sexual acts) in a naked or a half naked manner (b) part or most of the programmes have been made based on bad faiths and bad omens of strangers targeting Islam and Muslims, therefore they do not keep pace with the best interests of the Islamic Republic system (c): few programmes demonstrate humans flourishing in all aspects; it seems knowledge about this would be useful (*Kayhan*, 22 May 1994).

A glance at the style in which the *estefta* is written demonstrates the degree to which politics enjoys religious levers in today's Iran, where the *mustafti*, 64 by emphasising the negative aspects of satellite programmes, tried to dictate his own terms and influence the answer. In fact, only the first part of the *estefta*, in a very conventional sense was enough. As, for example, when a *mustafti* had earlier put an *estefta* to Ayatollah haj Mohammad Reza Isfahani Masjid Shahi, one of the leading *mujtahids* of that time, about the gramophone: Is 'sandiq-e *hefz al sowt*' (Voice memorise box, gramophone) the instrument of *lahv* (debauchery) or not? Listening to the gramophone has what kind of *Hukm* (decree, judgement)?

Ayatollah...Masjid Shahi's answer:

The instrument of debauchery witnessed by the *orf* (common law) and specified by *fugaha* 65 is that which is intentionally manufactured for debauchery and does not have *manfa'at-e maghsoudeh *hallal* (intentional *Hallal* benefit). Since there is neither of these two in the voice memorise box or *kateb al sowt* (voice writer, gramophone) as its literally translation shows, the innovator did not have any object except exploring a mystery among other mysteries deposited in nature. God gave him the ability to write voices and me [the ability to] read them, and nobody can write such [hand] writing and nobody can read it except he [God]. And now this instrument is the same as other voice instruments such as the telephone and radio. and none of them is the instrument of debauchery even though they are sometimes used in a *haram* way and there are clear differences between laying the foundation for *haram* and the exploitation of *haram* from *hallal*. Backgammon-boards and chess are both *haram* instruments even though exploited in a *hallal* way. Walnuts and rings are used as instruments of *hallal* even though many use them for gambling. Therefore hearing *hallal* or *haram* depends on the voice which has been recorded. If the voice is debauched, listening to it is *haram*. (Ostadi, 1994).

Also, in the case of radio, another *mustafti* put its *estefta* to Ayatollah Bourojerdi

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64one who consults a *mujtahid* on a point of religious jurisprudence, questioner.
65pl. of *faqieh* jurisconsult in Islamic law
in this way: Is the purchase of a radio for the home and listening to it *Hallal* (permissible)? Answer:

Self-evidently there is no objection to listening to this instrument and in this respect it is the common instrument of *hallal* and *haram*. For this reason, in response to some *estefta*(s), I have permitted its buying and selling. But since the presence of this instrument in every family causes easy access to the *lahviat* (debaucheries) and listening *avsate lahvi* (debauched voices), and most family members, because of the weakness of their religious beliefs and meagre knowledge (usually religious knowledge, emphasis added), have inclined towards debauchery, and the presence of this instrument in every house causes immorality among the majority of the family, therefore it is necessary for Muslims to avoid purchasing it [radio] (Ibid.).

The importance of issuing *fatwa*, its consequences and responsibilities for *mujtahid*, make it very risky, therefore they always try their best to find a comprehensive, and, at the same time, a broad reply in a very diplomatic way. Thus, in response to the above noted *estefta* about the use of satellite dishes and watching satellite programmes, Ayatollah Araki briefly and conditionally replied:

"An installation of a satellite dish (which paves the way for the penetration of strangers *mobtazal* (frivolous) culture into Islamic society and causes the destructive illness of the West to Muslims) is *haram* (acts prohibited by religion)" (Kayhan, 22 May 1994).

Although the most creditable religious reference to satellite is the Ayatollah ozma Araki's *fatwa* since he was the official *marja' taqlid* (source of imitation) of the Shi'ite, at least ten other *Mujtahids* gave their views or officially issued *fatwa* against the utilisation of satellite programmes. Amongst *ayat-e eazam*, Azari Qomi, Moemen, and Amini have made *haram* the watching of satellite programmes which would

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66 e.g. the *fatavi* below:

Ayatollah Sobhani made the utilising of satellite *haram*. As he explained:

"Things are only *hallal* when their benefits and their positive aspects dominate their negative aspects. In the case of satellite we see its negative(*haram*) aspects dominate its *hallal* aspects, as a result of the domination of its *haram* over its *hallal*, it is absolutely *haram*". (Resalat, 14 August 1994).

Ayatollah F. Lankarani in writing announced that:

According to what some reliable and clear-sighted people were saying, utilising satellite was generally and frequently related to immorality, obscene acts and *monkarat* (Sins of commission, unlawful acts) therefore its utilisation and transaction is *ghayer-e mashrou* (not permitted according to the sacred law of sharia) (Ibid.).

Ayatollah Makarem-e Shirazi, after detailed explanations, has remarked that:

"every wise person surely should close this window [satellite]. Initially one may say it [satellite] has scientific documentary movies, but these scientific documentary movies are an introduction to their bad omen's intentions and their other plans which they want to bring about. There is no doubt about satellite being *haram"* (Ibid.).
encourage ebtezal (frivolity) and be harmful for the country. Ayatollah Azari Qomi, one of the three other scholars of the Qom Theological School, reserved the right of Islam to use satellite to propagate Islam’s message:

"The haram nature of the transaction and installation of satellite that lays the foundations for utilising corrupted moral, social and political programmes is one of the axioms of figh and Islam... It is the duty of an Islamic state and people to react and challenge this instrument of corruption" (Kayhan, 22 May 1994).

Ayatollah Moamen gave a conditional view regarding the satellite. He stated:

"Watching movies which cause fesad (immorality) is not permissible and antenna which lead to such behaviour must be avoided”(Ibid.).

And finally Ayatollah Amini gave his view as follows:

"Since the transaction and utilisation of satellite antenna prepares the ground for the mobtazal (frivolous) culture of the “West” and would result in 'cultural invasion', it is the duty of the authorities of the Islamic system to challenge, with the best of their efforts, this dangerous conspiracy against Islamic values” (Ibid.).

Despite the more or less different focuses of the issued Fatavi, one may say that the main concern of Mujtahid(s) revolved around the satellite programmes. In their perception, the only role that a medium plays is transmission, thus satellite is no more than a carrier. This point is, frankly, in contradiction to the perception of some communication scholars, amongst whom is McLuhan (1964), who gave an important role to the medium itself even believing that “the medium is the message”. According to many Islamic academicians, to understand a medium, one should focus attention on its programmes, resources, and references. From now on, satellite could be a positive and productive outlet, or it could equally play a destructive role to an extent that it would destroy humanity. In religious terms, satellite by itself is not related to hallal or haram directly, hallal and haram revolve around the programmes and their effects on society. As Saidi (1994) reasons:

"The Salamat (health) and fesad (corruption) as well as good and evil are related to knowing: who are the producers of [satellite] programmes, within what school of thought and ideology they are made, the goal, the culture, and for what generation and what audience a programme is produced and broadcast. If the producers of satellite programmes rely on vahy (inspiration) based on a full understanding of humanity and make
programmes in the direction of human dignity and the re-construction of the world and akherat (futurity), surely satellite will be the most desired and useful means for mankind. But in the situation in which human beings find themselves in bohran-e khodframoshi (literally: 'self-forgetfulness' crises) and surrounded by ignorance and corruption, the producers of these programmes have nothing to offer humanity except fuel for this crisis" (Jomhuri-ye Islami, 27 October 1994).

But what elements should be considered when evaluating the content? Usually mara-je teqlid pay especial attention to the implications of the content for religion itself, the morality, the socio-political interests of the Umat-e Islam (nation of Islam), as well as the clergy's historical concerns. This is the case especially when a programme somehow is related to non-Muslim agents. In the past, many mujtahid(s) who have issued fatwa against some innovations, particularly communication outlets, believed that the “western” and kuffar (pl. Kāfīr, one who covers [the truth], nonbeliever, atheists) aimed to weaken the spirit of the Muslim religion. This provided grounds to deny all positive aspects of these innovations. However, the Fatavi of some mujtahid(s) e.g. Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Isfahani and ayate eazam Bourojerdi and Khomaini in which they admitted the positive aspects of the outlets, to some extent changed this approach, but they also believed in the bad intentions of those who introduced these outlets, and in the conspiracy lying behind these innovations. Each fatwa should be seen in the light of its concrete situation. As Ostadi (1994) explains “one of the reasons for issuing Fatwa against satellite is that people do not have enough awareness to keep away from harmful programmes, plus the fact that there is not enough quality programmes produced inside the country to compete with satellite programmes”.

The reaction to satellite shows a new anxiety has been added to the old attitudes and approaches, in other words, the mara-je in post-revolutionary Iran is not only worried about the weakness of people's religious faith, but they are also anxious about the weakness of the foundations of the political system. Fatavi is not a new political lever. Its application has changed in recent decades; amongst other things, it was used to put pressure on the political system. Nowadays, in contrast, Fatavi mainly function
in favour of the political system. This is particularly understandable when both institutions, that is the political and religious, are facing the new global order.

As far as the medium is concerned, regardless of its effects on the message, the philosophy of being *haram* or *hallal* is to an outlet’s functions. To give a general example, buying a house is not self-evidently *haram* or *hallal*, nevertheless if the buyer's intention is to use the property as a gambling-house or if it is actually used for such a purpose it would be a *haram* act. This can be applied to communication outlets as well. To evaluate an outlet in a religious sense, one can refer to an agreed statement among the *mara-je*. If a means has *manfa’ate mota’refay-e haram* (prohibited conventional function) it is *haram*, even though it may commonly be acceptable. Nevertheless, there are some means whose common functions are *hallal*, in this case their occasional usage in *haram* ways does not change their *hallal* nature. As Ayatollah Isfahani Masjid Shahi put “drying wheat over a drum does not change the debauched nature of the drum, therefore it is (the drum) a *haram* instrument. In contrast some accessories such as rings and cups, despite their common usage for gambling, remain *hallal*” (Ostadi, 1994). The third alternative is the existence of those means which can be either *hallal* or *haram* which according to their application need a *fatwa*.

Regarding the new communication outlets, especially in the case of the gramophone, and probably loudspeakers, some *mujtahid(s)* issued *hukm-e hormat* (prohibited mandate) against these outlets. Amongst those, Ayatollah Shikh Abdol Kariem-e Shirazi, the founder of the Qom Theological School, absolutely prohibited listening to the gramophone67, while some others announced their acceptance, for example, Ayatollah Isfahani. Masjid Shahi issued a *fatwa* in favour of the gramophone, radio, telephone and other outlets. The main tendency among the *mujtahids* is to regard the new outlets as potentially both *hallal* and *haram*. In this case, the *mujtahid*, at the time of issuing a *fatwa*, initially accepted the case as *hallal*, but they pointed to the negative implications of the outlet, and then, merely for the sake of some of these negative aspects, they asked followers to avoid its utilisation, as, in the case of radio

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67 However he issued a *fatwa* in favour of radio.
and television, *ayate eazam* Bourojerdi and Khomaii respectively did so. Since these outlets shared *hallal* and *haram*, some mujtahid had no objection about their transaction and even their utilisation. However, because they were worried about the content, in some cases they issued *Fatavi* against transaction, installation and utilisation, whereas others emphasised the *haram* aspects and asked their followers not to be involved in any related process.

In any case, the issuing of *Fatavi* against satellite has some distinct differences from the *Fatavi* issued for other outlets in the past. As stated earlier, in the pre-revolutionary era, the mujtahid(s) did not care about the existing political system as they do today. This was the first time that the mujtahid(s) were concerned about the short and long term interests of the existing political system. The other differences are the lack of enough debates and the absence of disagreement over the issue between the mujtahid(s). In the past there was an extensive discourse between mujtahid(s) e.g. the discourse of Ayatollah haj sheikh Mohammad Reza Isfahani Masjied Shahi and other leading mujtahid(s), about the gramophone and radio (Ostadi, 1994). Taking into consideration that satellite is programmed and broadcast from outside the country, there ought to be more disagreement about it in comparison with other outlets. However, it seems that those mujtahid(s) who had different interpretations of DBS are staying silent for their own good and that of the political system.

How effective the *fatwa* is, is another story. Basically a *fatwa* is only binding for the followers of a mujtahid, therefore issuing a *fatwa* does not mean every Shi'ite Muslim must follow it\(^68\). Secondly, acceptance of a *fatwa* by followers depends on the strength and weakness of their faith, the subject of the *fatwa*, the time and place and so on. However, what is evident is that in some occasions the *fatwa* plays a contradictory role in the IRI, since the needs of applying the principals of religion, and the necessities of the civil society and modern laws stand opposed. It is true that, in the case of satellite, the issued *fatavi* changed the Majles' atmosphere in favour of a prohibition bill, and many representatives even changed their minds in favour of banning satellite

\(^68\) Perhaps to compensate for this limitation, every mujtahid has issued his own *fatwa* in order to cover as many followers as possible.
reception, but it is also true that many of them (at least 70 representatives) voted against the plan despite the Fatavi.
Chapter VI

The Impact of DBS on the Iranian Media Sphere

In the previous chapters the introduction and the spread of DBS into Iranian society were discussed, as were the popular discourses around this issue. The concern of this chapter is to, firstly, assess what impact DBS has had on the Iranian media environment, and more specifically on the broadcasting system within the context of globalisation, and, secondly, what are the responses of Iranian media policy makers to the new developments. This consists of looking at their perspectives and the measures they have taken since the popularisation of DBS in Iran from 1993 until 1997. Much of the contemporary concerns described later are taken from interviews with related authorities and informants in different organisations.

1. Monopoly in Transition

One of the clear cut effects of DBS in Iran is the questioning of the existing broadcasting monopoly. The existence of new alternatives for national broadcasting, the popular taste for access to satellite channels, the demand for the deregulation and the establishment of private channels, the audience's pressure on the state authorities to allow other voices rather than the ones authorised by a single broadcasting headquarters, all can be translated into the fact that the monopoly is now in a state of crisis. Before proceeding, however, it seems useful to present a short summary of what can be counted as the main structural principles of broadcasting in the IRI.

There is a characteristic Islamic model for the guidance of Iranian national broadcasting. This model is distinctly different from most of the existing models exercised around the globe. In its ideal-typical form, the IRI broadcasting model has been defined as a public university by Ayatollah Khomaiine. Education has been made the base of the VVIR's broadcasting policy and then, since the university is not exclusive but open to the public, redefined as a cultural network (Souroush, August-September 1994, no: 705 -interview with VVIR director). Conceiving of radio and
television as a public university or a cultural network, initially indicates the state's expectation of using the media as a way of enforcing public religious influence in society through the broadcasting system. The designation of broadcasting as a university is indicative of the government's attitude towards radio and television, which they saw as purely informative. To illustrate the importance of such an attitude towards broadcasting, one can refer to the fact that the founder of the Islamic republic, Ayatollah Khomaiini, has spoken about this apparatus more than any other organisation. This concern is mostly rooted in the success of radio and television before the revolution, in which it significantly contributed to westernising the Iranian middle and upper class lifestyle and began to influence the vast majority of people. After the revolution, this perceived success demonstrated the potential of the electronic media and increased the significance of these outlets. Therefore, alongside the traditional notion of Islam, which gives an important role to communication as a whole and to propaganda in particular, this has raised the expectations of the new rulers towards using these outlets to undo any modernisation, or so-called Westernisation. Using Beyer's (1994) phrase the media became an "antisystemic instrument" to compensate for the global influences during the last regime. This expectation went even further since the mass media unprecedentedly served the social movement during the revolution. However, what has been less considered in this evaluation was the homogeneity of the content of the mass communication media with the process of modernisation and globalisation during the Pahlavi. In that time, the media content was supporting those processes and in return was receiving support from the agents of modernisation and globalisation. As far as the media and the Iranian revolution were concerned, the success of the media in mass mobilisation during the revolution was mainly the result of the Islamic slogans which targeted widespread inequality and the lack of politico-economic progress, more than the media's performance. This role of religion is mainly inspired by the fact that social movements are still one of the residual areas in which religion can play a significant role.
From the early years of the Republic, attempts towards reorienting the highly specialised media, particularly television, were shaped by various expectations; prime among them was educating people based on Islamic principles in an attempt to built up Jameay-e shareiat madar-mehvar (a shari-a oriented society). However, on a deeper and more important level, education, even Islamic education, has been less at issue than the political direction of education and who controls this education. This is to emphasise that at the core of this educational or cultural approach is the sublime teaching of Islam which was not immune from the political interests of a conservatist ruling elite and paradoxically from the global trends which were the concern of the ruling elites. At this point it can be argued that, although mass communication is used for enforcing religion, which Beyer (1994:6) defines as a "type of communication based on the immanent/transcendent polarity", it is deeply mixed with political trends. In this regard, the new system illustrates the features of both the authoritarian and the soviet models of broadcasting, since it has assigned the media a role as collective propagandist and educator in the building of an Islamic society. Plus, the state has the right to make policy, to exercise control and censorship, and at the same time, has the main principle of the subordination of the media to the political hegemony.69 What is missing from this chain, however, in comparison with the soviet model, is that, the IRI model until recently, did not put any emphasis on culture and information or on the task of economic and social development, as well as reflecting cultural diversity. In any case, the model was designed to protect the established religio-political system. Put differently, as Dr Azad of the VVIR pointed out precisely

"What all the IRI media policy and performance is about is to save a thing, namely the Islamic Republic system. This is an important factor when policy makers want to take decisions about policy, the carrier and the programmes". Personal Interview (PI).

To attain this end the entire broadcasting system was officially monopolised.

69 On normative pattern see: McQuail 1994.
- Sieber, F. at el (1956).
In order to defend the broadcasting monopoly, the relevant authorities' reasoned that a monopoly system could maintain the religio-cultural identity and save the religion from marginalisation and relativisation in the face of new global developments. According to Talebzadeh of MCIG:

"saving religious and national values are the bases of the IRI communication and cultural policies. To do this we needed to be single minded. The previous years were not the right time to be involved with different networks. When we build up the basis of an Islamic culture and when we became sure about different segments of the society which are immune from the contagion of anti-Islamic culture, we will permit non-governmental organisations to participate in broadcasting as we did in the case of the press. It does not take a long time. It is just a matter of two or three years from now (1996)" (PI).

These kinds of ideas, on which has been built the basis of a 'preference system', fertilise the ground to form a broadcasting system which has the main characteristics of norm making and mobilisation, according to the presuppositions of Islam (Mohammadi, 1996). These circumstances are constantly justified by some major events, amongst which were the unstable situation at the outset of the revolution, the war with Iraq, and the start of the reconstruction period. According to M. Jamaei of MCIG:

"this monopoly is not a sham. Radio and television are cultural apparatuses which should be observed carefully. Maintaining the monopoly unified the nation particularly when the country lived through a reconstruction period. It integrated different social and geographical segments of the population" (PI).

As the IRI's normative pattern of broadcasting is unique, the monopoly system also has its own specification. As the general definition of monopoly would suggest, it actually involves the controlling of transmission. "A broadcasting monopoly means that only one institution is allowed to send from a given territory", Rolland and Østbye (1986: 116). Therefore the monopoly's right is only restricted to transmission and does not cover the production of content or reception of the signals. Nevertheless this definition is far from reality in many societies; as in the Iranian case, these two areas are also covered by the monopoly. Therefore, the right of independent producers and audience for access to other sources is denied. The result was an absolute monopoly
that was supported by several major factors until recently. Legally, Article 7 of the Article of Association of the VVIR has officially recognised the right of the VVIR to monopolise the whole broadcasting system in the country. Technologically the limited number of airwaves restricted the chance of other bodies' involvement. Here indeed, the monopoly served as a preferred solution for the exploitation of limited resources, supported by the relevant international organisations such as the ITU, as the number of channels available for each country were decided by such international bodies. Despite the fact that the political forces were always the key factor behind the monopoly, economically, the need for large investment capital and the other costs of broadcasting had secured this monopoly to the extent that this factor alone could prevent competitors. Finally, the broadcasting organisation by itself had an influential role in maintaining this monopoly, since they enjoyed many political, social and financial advantages due to their uniqueness in the absence of any rivals.

Under the new media environment, keeping the old monopoly has increasingly become difficult because of the following: there are hundreds of well-equipped foreign competitors; there is uncertainty about technological change; here apart from DBS and two breakthroughs in radio broadcasting, that is, FM broadcasting and the digitalisation of radio broadcasting which increases the number of radio frequencies, VCRs and multi-media computers had become a threat for continuation of VVIR monopoly. Indeed, the new technology decreases the importance of national broadcasting and, by the same token, its monopoly. Considering the fact that the new DBS channels are organised under different principles and therefore offer content diversification, their implications for the Iranian broadcasting monopoly became more extensive. These impacts not only extended to attracting audiences at the cost of national broadcasting, but also affected the existing equation between sender and receiver. In this regard, one of the important roles of the introduction of DBS in Iran was to change the position of the audiences from a passive receptor to an active agent. To put it differently, the availability of various channels led to a natural interaction, or a bilateral relationship, between audiences and the monopoly, and obliged the national broadcasting system to
respond to the audience's demands. Particularly where the monopoly is based on a political decision, it always claims it has been designed for the good of the audience, therefore it could not remain apathetic, unresponsive and unchanged within the new media environment. Following Rolland and Østbye (1986) basically one should distinguish between market monopolisation and monopolisation for political reasons. As far as the market monopoly is concerned, consumer reaction has nothing to do with control, whereas in the case of monopolisation by political decision, decisions are made by the politicians who indeed act as the representative of consumers and it may be maintained or abolished by the consumer's reaction, acting as voters. In the case of the broadcasting monopoly, which in Iran, at least, was established based on political decision, the new situation has prepared the ground for the audience's active role. Nevertheless, the audience's role is also subject to some additional factors such as financial contribution. When the audiences do not financially contribute and all broadcasting expenditure is paid by the government or any other sponsors, the position of the audience is not determining. In other words, in such a case there is not enough credit given to the audience's vote.

To address the implications of DBS for the Iranian broadcasting monopoly in which the transmission, production and reception were subject to a stark monopoly, one can argue that these preconditions were ascertained as a side effect of DBS. Therefore, DBS has directly and indirectly strengthened the audiences' position. As a direct effect, one can point to the fact that nowadays the Iranian audiences, technologically, are not limited to domestic channels, but can turn to different international channels based on their choice. No matter if the legal access to these channels has been denied, what is important is the very possibility of the access. To exhibit these indirect implications, it is worth mentioning that in reacting to DBS, the IRI mainly relied on domestic radio and television to preserve the domestic audiences. This policy resulted in an increase in the number of channels, and at the same time, the extension of the length of broadcasting. Since conducting these developments was not possible within the government budget, despite the organisation's annual increase, to
secure enough revenue, they had to rely on the audience's pocket by adopting a licence fee policy[^70]. Here the contribution of the audience by financing per se has prepared a justification and rational for the audiences' rights and could be counted as one of the reasons for shifting the monopoly to a 'lazy monopoly'. According to Hirschman (1970), a lazy monopoly may actually prefer to have some limited competition in order to provide what he calls an 'exit option' for the most quality-conscious and vocal customers (those who exercise their 'voice'). This description may well not fit the case of Iran, since as a first step, the IRI chose to ban the reception of satellite programmes. However, one should bear in mind that at the same time the VVIR seriously put the development of the broadcasting industry on the agenda and tried to further this endeavour by preparing the ground for the limited activity of non-government programme producers. As Dr Tabeshian, the Vice Chancellor of the VVIR, put it:

> "according to the plan, the producer companies should submit their narratives, either to the VVIR's programme maker groups or to the "Seyma Film" as an associated company of Seyma (television) or the Vice Chancellor's department. Subsequently, based on the evaluation of either of these sources, which are made based on the VVIR criteria, the private producers receive a production license or a negative response. Once a company receives a license it could enjoy financial credits and other forms of government supports, especially a low rate loan" (PI).

By such a modest solution, indeed, the VVIR responded to the pressures of the new media environment, and at the same time decreased the pressure of centralisation on the shoulders of the VVIR organisation, which had been expanded recently. The new measures could be counted as an initial step towards the deregulation of broadcasting and a decrease in the size of the monopoly as well.

In their interview some producers, or those who were somehow engaged in the new developments, did not conceal their negative view about this move. According to a programme producer, "the new policy is not a breakthrough for private sector contributions or the dilution of the monopoly, since the VVIR still has the dominant role in all areas of programme production" (PI). Also, as an Informant put it:

[^70]: This policy has been enforced since 1995. Every household has to pay 500 Rials (~ $0.15) as the license fee over the electricity bill.
"Seyma Film" was established to boost special broadcasting taste. Those colleagues who are in sympathy with the VVIR's criteria could gain enough, and those who were not or do not want to be, will lose. This is similar to what is happening right now in the publication industry i.e. those who are in step with the MCIG enjoy subsidies and those who do not, lose many opportunities just because of the unequal competition" (PI).  

In spite of such a criticism, the participation of the private sector in broadcasting is a positive move, especially from the production aspect. It engages producers in broadcasting and keeps them active. The VVIR director believes "the measure gives a role to the cultural potentials of those outside of the VVIR organisation" (Abrar, 11 January 1994). In addition, and from a legal point of view, it may result in a positive experience which can pave the way for further private sector participation and deregulation.

Altogether, one can conclude that despite the importance of maintaining the monopoly for the IRI, the forces of change make such a task difficult. This is particularly the case when maintaining the monopoly socially and politically, as financially it is going to be very costly. Pressure on the monopoly comes from both external and internal forces, especially internal audiences, who mainly complain about programmes, and the policies which dominate the radio and television. What seems to be chosen as the solution is a kind of step by step policy towards decreasing the role of the state in broadcasting. As stated, some elements of this policy at the present time are: the permission for programme making in the private sector; the re-broadcasting of some satellite programmes; the revision of the normative pattern of programmes; and the audience's financial contribution.

2. Emergence of New Interest Groups

New communications technologies, with all their concomitant opportunities, have paved the way for the formation of some new interest groups in various areas of

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71 This remark refer to the MCIG policy for publication. According to this policy publishers have been classified based on their positions towards state or, as it is said, towards revolution. The state publishers and the pro-government publishers receive subsidies, such as cheap paper, other raw materials, printing machines and parts.
the media industry, e.g. in production, distribution and consumption. Each of the above mentioned groups are indeed trying to enjoy the fruits of the new developments in communication. However, to access the new facilities they are faced with some economic, political and cultural obstacles. A brief review of recent developments relating to satellite broadcasting in Iran shows the formation of these nascent groups, and the difficulties which they encounter. The main barrier to the progress of the new interest groups is the recent bill in which utilising satellite equipment has been banned. As a result, audiences, foreign broadcasting (programme producers and broadcasters) and the suppliers of equipment are now being deprived of, respectively, access to the satellite's programmes, audiences and consumers. However, despite such limitations, other groups and institutions are attempting to utilise satellite for broadcasting and different schemes are going ahead.

To introduce the new communication interest groups in Iran one can point to, for example, the Tehran Municipality, Payam-e Noor University (PNU), the Ministry of Education, to name only a few. Each of these institutions attempts to gain access to the broadcasting channels for their own purposes.

Tehran Municipality wanted to establish an urban channel, reasoning that:

"the acceleration of urban developments and the gathering of ethnic, religious, professional and other social groups in Tehran, along with the diversity of the information sources and the unbalanced access to these sources, has formed an intense need for media usage by the municipality...In Iran, the municipalities' access to television and other media is an important step towards social participation and involvement in urban issues".

The PNU wants to have its own educational channel, because of their special method of education, that is, distance learning. The services of the VVIR to produce and broadcast the PNU educational programmes were inappropriate, and the high cost of such a service were among the reasons why the University Board was persuaded to gain access to its own satellite channel (Ebrahimzadeh, 1997).

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72 The Suggested Plan of The Tehran Municipality Television Channel for The City of Tehran. Spring, 1995
The Ministry of Education also recently intends to broadcast some secondary school courses. Taking into consideration that there is an increasing number of applicants for education and the distribution of the population in a sizeable country like Iran, they believe the plan will be very successful and cost effective (Ibid.).

Not surprisingly, recently some of the above mentioned applicants have progressed and have become engaged in broadcasting to some extent. The fifth television network which began broadcasting in 1995, in Tehran, was a joint venture between the VVIR and Tehran Municipality. What makes this initiative significant is the participation of a quasi-government institution from outside the whole broadcasting system. What is noteworthy is that Tehran Municipality basically claims more than just a share in a channel and indeed has prepared itself for an independent channel. In spring 1995, Tehran Municipality devised a comprehensive plan entitled "The Suggested Plan of Tehran Municipality Television Channel for The City of Tehran" apparently named *Kanal-e Hamshahri* (Citizens channel). This was a relevant name since the municipality is publishing the most popular daily news in a very well designed format with the same name i.e. *Hamshahri*. In the introduction to the plan (1995: 1) it is interesting to read that:

"the thought of establishing local radio and television has existed in minds from a long time ago, but until the 1990s, which was the beginning of the formation of the international and regional radio and television networks, this thought was rarely mentioned. Television is cost effective and multi-functional, and what is more the specialisation of television networks opened a new view to those who were interested in this issue."

The second initiative was undertaken by the PNU as a distance learning based university, with more than 120 educational centres across the country and several centres abroad, such as the Azarbayjan Republic and the United Arab Emirate-UAE- (*Jomhuri-ye Islami*, 10 August 1995). The university was actually re-established on the structure of the former Free University of Iran (FUI) which was established in the early 70s<sup>73</sup> and the Abouraihan Birooni University (ABU), the first correspondence

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<sup>73</sup> The Free University of Iran (FUI); when the university was re-established in 1986 it was named *Payam-e*
university in Iran. Since the beginning, the FUI began broadcasting educational
programmes via National Iranian Television (NITV) channel 2, however they were
faced with some difficulties such as coverage problems. After the revolution, the
university closed down, mainly because the educational authorities did not believe in the
whole concept of distance learning. Then, the university was re-established and re-
named in the mid 1980s, when the student applications for higher education grew very
fast and the existing conventional universities could not meet these needs. During the
new course of activities, the development of audio-visual materials were put on the
agenda of the university, and the new approach of co-operation with television began.
However, once again, due to some difficulties concerning the lack of quality
programmes and appropriate broadcasting time, coverage difficulties, and also the high
costs for programme making and broadcasting, the University has suspended the plan
and relied on self-teaching books and, to a limited extent, audio-visual materials. With
this background and more recent developments in which the University has 182,000
students, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the availability of satellite
broadcasting, the PNU was led to concentrate on its own educational television
network. Given this, the authorities of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education
(MCHE) and the PNU have signed a protocol costing US $ 50 million with Russia to
establish this network and broadcast the PNU educational programmes to be
implemented within the next five years. 45% of the required capital is to be granted by
the Islamic Development Bank following negotiations held recently (Ettela'at, 17
August 1995).74

There are also those organisations which are applying to utilise VSAT75. Among these groups are the banks which have ambitions to manage their transactions
nationally and internationally, as well as to establish cash machines. The IRI Aviation

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Noor (the Message of Light) University.

74 On this and for comprehensive information about PNU see:

75 Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT): small ground stations under different titles such as personal ground
stations, mini or micropurpose terminals used in exclusive satellite network. VSATs have different
advantages such as low cost, light weight, portability and easy installation; these stations are used for
voice, data and teleconferencing.
Company is also interested in modernising the reservations system and land-air operations. The Ministry of Roads and Transportation is trying to manage up-to-date information on transportation and road accidents. The IRI News Agency (IRNA) is modernising their news processing. The Social Security Organisation wants to improve the transmission of data related to the country's labour force, the situation of factories and workshops and the delivery of medical services. The International Institution for Seismology and The Engineering of The Earthquake, wants to use satellite communication for recognition of earth movements and timely information about natural disasters. The Plan and Budget Organisation (PBO) wants it for access to the world's information banks, updating the information necessary for planning. The National Iranian Steel Company, which has only recently appeared in the international steel market, needs a VSAT as a link with the global steel stock market. As time has gone by some of these organisations have succeeded in operating through VSATs.

In the area of the production of satellite reception equipment, there are also some intense and contradictory activities. Before ratification of the law for the prohibition of utilising satellite equipment, many factories and workshops began producing satellite dishes and assembling decoders. These activities were cut short when the law was imposed. However businesses concerned in the manufacture of this equipment have still remained lucrative in an underground form. This has created some illegal interest groups; smugglers who import antenna and receivers from neighbouring countries mainly from the UAE. Others groups are involved in the installation of dishes and receivers, as well as repairing the receivers.

There is a sort of unwritten policy to deal with these two types of nascent groups. Those who are seeking access to VSAT (as outlined above) can operate more or less without restrictions. In contrast, those who are seeking access to satellite for

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76 On this see: Khabar Name-y-e Anfomatic (Informative New Letter), no. 5&6 January-February 1993; the news and scientific publication of the High Council of Information.
77 As far as I traced the case, the smugglers deliver the equipment by sail-boat to a slight distance off the Persian Gulf and Oman sea shores, and then by dividing the shipments into many parcels, deliver them by fast motorised boats to the different destinations. The next step is to transport these parcels to different destinations inside the country, mainly Tehran and other major cities. At the final destination, local distributors pass them to the consumers.
broadcasting are restricted by the law. When it comes to educational broadcasting, however, it seems the PNU have succeeded in coming up with a protocol to establish its own broadcasting channel. What will happen in the process is unpredictable. Nonetheless access to broadcasting, for more general purposes, still faces difficulties, as in the case of Tehran Municipality. Despite its importance, its application for an independent channel did not proceed. In this example, it seems that part of the difficulties arose from the competition between factions; that is, in the making decisions about the performance of such a network for public broadcasting, the relations of the initiators with the political factions played an important role. Thus, it is not surprising that Tehran Municipality could not gain access to its own channel, when the above mentioned initiators were not in step with Majles, the VVIR and MCIG, which are controlled by conservatives. According to Dr. Azad of the VVIR,

"indeed formation of the new interest groups is the reflection of the developments which have happened outside the borders. However, in our society, because of some sort of factional interests, some do not like to pay attention to these groups, for example, when the Tehran Municipality has an effective role in the formation and operation of channel 5, some overtly are denying this role". (PI).

This is to say, if Tehran Municipality was run by conservatives, the chances of proceeding with their application for an urban channel would be more than an application suggested by the present Mayor who has reformist tendencies.

In contrast with broadcasting, the new interest groups in the data communication area are emerging and progressing very fast. Since this domain is less regulated, we are now witnessing powerful companies even claiming to participate in policy making, who are streets ahead in comparison with the new interest groups in the broadcasting domain. After raising the question of the necessity of cautiously joining Iran to the information super highway, engineer Naser-e Jamaly the chief executive of the "Information Network of Iran" (IRNET), wrote an article entitled "Internet, Joining or not Joining" (Iran, 10 March 1996: 8). In it, he criticised the lack of any comprehensive plan on the government’s side for such a significant issue. He criticised
the slow movement of the private sector to put pressure on official circles to fix information system policy, with the view of allocating a special place for the private sector. As he remarked:

"if our colleagues in the private sector are not cautious and take the initiative to open the way to extend this industry, we, in IRNET, have no choice except to take action by ourselves. We are not worried about the government organs of control. What is certain is that we cannot freeze our capital forever and be without any return on capital".

In this way, under the influence of the new communication environment, not only have different interest groups, whether in the government or private sector, formed, but also they have begun to put pressure on the policy-making apparatus. Mohssen-e Ghan-e Baseri, the Managing Director of Modereyate, a News and Education Bulletin of the Iranian Association of Management, in an article titled "Development Management and the Communication Policy" has written,

"at the present time in our country, the mass communication apparatuses that are interested in satellite have been subject to an epidemic of elimination. An epidemic that could deprive the country's managers of a huge amount of necessary information. Today's world is the information world, the flow of information and its exchange reaches further than national boundaries and this could effect the process of development of a country. This is especially the case when nowadays the process of development could not be ascertained without transnational, or in an exact words extra-territorial exchange" Modereyat, Autumn 1994: 2, no. 14.

The interest groups do not necessarily have an independent identity, as is the case of Tehran Municipality and the PNU referred to earlier. Due to convergence between communication outlets, on some occasions established organisations appear in the role of a new interest group. One of the best example of such an innovation is the new role which is being played by the VVIR. Traditionally, an organisation involved in broadcasting, it is now using part of its transponder's capacity for telecommunication purposes, and so it has became a rival to the PTT. Dr. Tabeshian of the VVIR put his remarks about this new role of VVIR in this way,

"new communication technologies and their easy access have resulted in the formation of the groups which have found different and easier ways of access, for example, they have
begun to compete with the Telecommunication Company. Even we ourselves thought that when we have space services (transponders which have been leased from Intelesat) we can operate voice and data communication between Tehran and our other VVIR centres. Why should we not use it? That is, we ourselves have become a competitor [a rival interest group] of the PTT. Soon after, other organisations contacted us [the VVIR] for such a service, for example IRNA, PBO and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). They wanted us to authorise them to use parts of our space capacity" (PI).

Although it is still too soon to see the role of different interest groups in determining guide-lines and policy, they are increasing very fast, particularly when supported by the process of globalisation, to the extent that ignoring their existence and their role is fuelling the crises of the communication policy.

3. Privatisation of Broadcasting

*The Spread of Private Broadcasting Trends*

DBS was among the causes which raised the questions of deregulation and the contribution of the private sector in different realms of broadcasting. By taking seriously the plan for banning satellite reception, all internal beneficiaries, namely people, government and Majles, drew attention to the VVIR. Here both 'pros' and 'antis' of foreign satellite broadcasting agreed upon the rights of audiences and that their demands should be met. There were no ways to permit audiences to gain access to the foreign channels, so the important role of domestic television as the only legitimate alternative became clear. Within such an environment, after almost three decades of deadlock in the activities of the private channels, the issue of private participation was raised from different circles. Among others, M. Faried, a former aide to the VVIR and MCIG authorities, in an article entitled "Rooftops Under The Siege of Satellites" commented that,

"diversification of television channels will be possible just by their hand-over to the private sector. However, some may say that the issue is contrary to constitutional law, but one should take into consideration that the emphasis of the constitutional law is to direct the television under the supervision of the leadership. This does not necessarily equate with being state run" (Salam, 10 July 1994).
Consequently M. Owhadi, a university lecturer, in an article titled "Broadcasting Systems and The Right For Access To Information" called for the lifting of barriers to the participation of people and the private sector in establishing cable television services (Hamshahri, 21 November 1994). Later the idea of private channels as an alternative solution became widespread in intellectual circles. Here one should distinguish between what Iranians understand as a "private broadcasting" with what is conceived by this concept in Western societies. Basically, while the same can be said for public broadcasting, the idea of private broadcasting is an unknown concept to the mass of the people. The intellectuals refer to this concept as channels which run independent of the state and provide neutral news and views as well as entertainment programmes. In practice, most Iranians understand this term to mean the presence of a competitor to the VVIR. They are actually looking for an alternative, for diversification, rather than inviting the market into this business.

Following the above mentioned remarks, Dr. M. J. Larijani in an article titled "Satellite and The Islamic System" in Resalat, 19 December 1994, pointed to the necessity of the provision of a cable network for the non-government sector. He emphasised the importance of such a measure for diversification of programmes. M. J Larijani's remarks about the presence of the non-government sector in broadcasting was unexpected, since his perspective usually reflects the traditional faction's thinking. While the latter comment may bemuse an audience, the remarks of a member of the MCIG leaves little room for doubts about the possibility of sharing with a private sector in broadcasting, as Talebzadeh puts it:

"Privatisation of broadcasting in Iran would not be a surprise, in contrast it is very likely to occur. Nonetheless the problem is, we do not have its pattern. Publication and press have given good results, so one should apply this knowledge to the study of broadcasting. Shi'ite thought is not closed, we are not going to cross the whole idea out merely because this approach is very popular in the 'West'. If one can manage it to the extent that the limits of Islamic criteria are considered properly, it would be good for the state to support. From the financial point of view we could manage a subsidy as we [the government] pay for publication and the press. In addition, they could finance themselves through advertising and other permitted ways of
making revenue. One could foresee that despite some difficulties, privatisation is ongoing" (PI).

Although, as indicated above, both main factions might in principal agree upon the presence of a private sector in broadcasting, the focus then becomes the degree of independence while the private channels are permitted. According to Dr Azad of the VVIR "the question is not "private" or "non-private", what is needed is a new definition of the relation between state and broadcasting as a whole and some sort of guarantee about what will be defined" (PI). Though the state's attitude towards private broadcasting is the most important factor in the realisation of private channels, to see the whole concept in a brighter light, I now turn to some fundamental obstacles to the privatisation of broadcasting.

**The Existing Barriers for Private Broadcasting**

The state expectations of electronic media, which are manifested in different laws and regulations and unwritten guide lines, could be regarded as the main barriers to private broadcasting at the present time. As a result, one can point to deregulation at different levels as the most fundamental measure for private sector contributions. Without such deregulation, there could be no chance for the emergence of private broadcasting. This is because, in the absence of deregulation, any private channels could not be more than a new state or government channel, given the fact that they would not have enough control over their fate. However, what is surprising is that despite a tendency towards privatisation, the chance for different levels of deregulation is low. In Iran, regulation of mass communication actually means making boundaries between the modern and the traditional, between the religious and the secular, between conservatism and liberalism, and between the global and the local. Deregulation confuses these boundaries, therefore it is actually perceived as a religious and politico-cultural decision among the state authorities. This concern could illustrate the expectations of the IRI of private channels, that is, in an imaginary situation they will
receive a licence for establishment if they operate based on existing criteria. According to Dr Tabeshian of the VVIR,

"deregulation in technical sectors whether in the VVIR or the PTT is not complicated, but deregulation of the content of the message is a political-cultural decision. Based on positions before deregulation, one can divide countries into three groups; those who have adopted an open air policy, those who have exercised an in-between approach and the countries which have adopted a closed air policy. Our country indeed follows a closed air policy. However the question is how long this policy could be pursued despite the new communication technologies" (PI).

It might be possible that as a result of banning and eventual access to VCRs after a decade of serious conflict, the outcome is a 'half-ripe' private broadcasting system. The question of deregulation of broadcasting will remain far in the future. Even if the government agrees to private channels, they are subject to other barriers, e.g. legal, investment and financing barriers. I now turn to them in detail.

**Legal Barriers**

The main legal barriers to the privatisation of broadcasting consists of the Articles 44 and 175 of the constitutional law ratified on 1989, and Article 7 of the Articles of Association of the VVIR which was passed on 29 September 1983 and endorsed by Majles. Article 44 of the constitutional law has basically drawn attention to the separation of different economic sectors and their inclusion as activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to this Article:

"the economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to consist of three sectors, state, co-operative, and private, and is to be based on systematic and sound planning. The state sector is to include all large-scale and heavy industries, foreign trade, major minerals, banking, insurance, power generation, dams and large-scale irrigation networks, radio and television, post, telegraph and telephone services, aviation, shipping, roads, railroads and the like; all these will be publicly owned and administrated by the state. The co-operative sector is to include co-operative companies and enterprises concerned with production and distribution, in urban and rural areas, in accordance with Islamic criteria. The private sector consists of those activities concerned with agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade, and services that supplement the economic activities of the state and co-operative sectors" (The Constitutional Law of the IRI).

179
In this way the connection of this Article with radio and television was only limited to its inclusion in the areas of state ownership.

By the end of the war, when the economic pulse of the country began to drop due to different shortages and hardships, the policy makers gradually began decreasing the role of the state in the economic domain by opening up space for the private sector. Here, the new policy altered the boundaries between the three different sectors of ownership as they had been defined in the constitutional law. Since then, liberalisation of the economy and privatisation has, step by step, touched foreign trade, mines, insurance, the aviation industry, roads and recently the PTT. Of these, the privatisation of the aviation industry and post and telephone were unexpected and therefore could give some clues about the future of broadcasting. Basically, because of the attitude of the authorities towards these businesses, privatisation of the aviation industry was unexpected, or at least it was expected to stay at the bottom of the list alongside radio and television and the PTT. However, soon after the war, licenses for establishing aviation companies were issued, and the IRI aviation, which for many years had been monopolised by the state, was faced with domestic competitors. Based on the Organisation for Civil Aviation (OCA) from 1991, when issuing licenses for aviation companies began, until November 1994, 21 licenses were issued in total, of which nine have begun their service (Payam-e Amrooz, October-November 1994). Subsequently attention was drawn to the Post and Telephone industry. On 12 September 1995 the Iran newspaper in a report about the 1996 budget wrote "on the appendix of the Circular of Budget 1357/1996 it has been noted that the telecommunication industries belonging to the Telecommunication Company will be handed-over to the non-government sector, this will include 49 percent of regional telephone companies". The day after, Hamshahri reported that, "The legal ground for the establishment of postal and telephone centres via the non-government sector will be announced next year and the admissions of the applicants will begin. Also, the urban and rural telephone services centres and the existing public telephones will be handed over to the non-government sector (Hamshahri, 13 September 1995). According to Gharazi, the PTT
minister, until that time (August 1994), in Tehran alone, 50 applicants applied for licenses to establish postal services (Hamshahri 27 August 1994). Since then, many industries (except for radio and television and banks) have been handed over or are under negotiation to be handed over to the private sector. The gradual divesting of the areas under state ownership is indeed questioning the necessity of keeping the state sector.

Another Article which is perceived as a legal barrier for private broadcasting is Article 175 of the Constitutional Law. According to this article,

"The freedom of expression and dissemination of thought on the radio and television of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be guaranteed to be in keeping with the Islamic criteria and the best interests of the country. The appointment and dismissal of the head of the radio and television of the Islamic Republic of Iran rests with the Leader. A council consisting of two representatives each of the president, the head of the judiciary branch and the Islamic Consultative Assembly (ICA) shall supervise the functioning of this organisation. The policies and the manner of managing the organisation and its supervision will be determined by law".

Along with the revision of the Constitutional Law in 1989, the VVIR as an independent organisation went under the supervision of the Supreme Leader. Since then, the three branches given above have only been appointing their representatives in the VVIR. As the Article indicates, there is no serious barrier in the way of privatisation or, as the official circles prefer to say, 'non-government sector'. Indeed the mentioned Article revolves around directing the VVIR and ensuring the principles are followed when choosing the directors and managing the organisation, rather than referring to the establishment of new radio and television stations.

The most serious legal barrier to the presence of the private sector in broadcasting is Article 7 of the Articles of Association of the VVIR. This Article indicates that:

"The establishment of transmitters and the broadcasting of radio and television programmes in every part of the country are in the monopoly control of this organisation (VVIR). If any real or corporate bodies take steps to establish or operate such media their activities will be prevented by and prosecuted through legal
channels" (The Articles of Association of the VVIR passed on 29 of December 1980).

In fact, the noted Article laid the ground for the VVIR’s monopoly rights and therefore, from a legal point of view, every attempt to prepare the ground for private sector activities in this domain is related to the removal of this Article rather than Articles 44 and 175 of the Constitutional Law.

Discussions around the legal barriers for private sector participation in broadcasting have taken two approaches. Since the main emphasis is on Article 175 of the Constitutional Law, at the present time, some believe this Article has only an affirmative side, that is, it only makes it necessary for some guidelines and measures for directing the organisation without preventing others’ rights, whereas the second group believes that the Article has both an affirmative and privative side. Based on Dr. Tabeshian:

"Amongst the barriers, at the first stage is the Constitutional Law, that is, Article 175 which says radio and television should be formed under the guidance of the Supreme Leader. Naturally this approach is in contradiction to the unrestricted demands claimed by the private sector. In any case until this Article exists, one should forget the presence of the private sector. At the second stage is the VVIR memorandum which was endorsed by Majles, and recognised the monopoly of the VVIR" (PI).

In a direct fashion, Dr Kamran of Majles argued that "the law-makers basically negated the existence of the private sector; if not, they would mention it. Transferring the ultimate supervision to the Supreme Leader indeed indicated the monopoly right of the VVIR" (PI).

Investment difficulties

Traditionally Iranian investors are reluctant to invest long-term, no matter whether it is industrial, agricultural or purely commercial, although in the late Shah’s regime, a tendency towards investing in these areas was forming, mainly caused by the investors enjoyment of support from the government and foreign companies. Even in

78 see: M. Faried argument p: 177.
the case of former commercial television, the owner of the channel was actually supported by many foreign companies, such as Pan American Airline, RCA, Electrolux, Kelvinator, Westinghouse, General Electric, VolksWagen, General Tyre, and Pepsi-Cola, through which Sabet's channel could introduce their products into the Iranian markets (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). This is to say that, apart from some concrete difficulties, this general trend in the first stage restricts investment in broadcasting activities. Basically, it is difficult to enter into this business without large capital resources (mainly because of high fixed costs and high launch costs). One cannot hope to start up a significant television channel "in a small way".79

Here, the question is, to what extent does the recent global tendency towards investing in cultural and communication sectors encourage the Iranian investor? Putting aside the conventional definition of 'private' in Iran and the lack of desire noted above, one can point to the new endeavours of non-government or quasi-government sectors during the recent developments. Tehran Municipality and Payam-e Noor University have moved to establish their own television network, which indicates the origin and the potential of the new investors. The potential of the private sector to invest in this business at the present time depends on the removal of the existing difficulties, particularly the legal barriers. Otherwise every estimation relies on conjectures. For example, investment in terrestrial networks by the private sector, considering Iran's geographical size, topological factors, and the distribution of the population, economically seems not to be cost-effective, and therefore is unattractive for the applicants. The second possibility, that is, leasing from the existing terrestrial channels, is also far from realistic, due to the costs and difficulties related to revenue. It is worth mentioning that terrestrial broadcasting, even in the case of leasing is not cost-effective, as the VVIR itself since 1985, has gradually been abandoning this method of broadcasting. The third possibility is to lease a transponder and broadcast to the terrestrial stations and re-distribute it terrestrially, the same as the VVIR. This method needs thousands of TVRO and transmitters. In addition, this measure leaves the

enterprise with the problem of two methods of broadcasting at the same time, and, apart from the vast amount of initial investment, the administration and maintenance aspects would be very costly. Despite the existing prohibition law, DBS, given the demographic and geographical specifications of Iran, would be the most cost-effective way of broadcasting for both government and non-government broadcasters. The final option is to use cable. However, the possibility of establishing a cable-based broadcasting system is not clear yet. According to a public relations aide of the PTT "at the present time the exploitation of 13 cable channels in Tehran is possible" (PI). This was confirmed in different words by the PTT Deputy Minister for Planning by remarking that "now about 6,000 kilometres of optic fibre in the country has been laid in the ground and by 1997 it will reach 30,000 kilometres. At the moment Tehran's telephone centres are connected to each other via optic fibre" (PI). This indicates access to cable in Iran particularly, by the 11,000,000 population in Tehran is not far fetched, although the subsidiary cables to individual houses are not all networked yet. Along these lines, the infrastructure of cable broadcasting in Iran has been built based on optic fibre through the ground, which is very advanced and enjoys good quality. In any case, apart from some more advanced methods such as 'video on demand', the best carrier of broadcasting for any applicant in Iran at the present time would be DBS, if the current legal barriers were removed. This is to say that this method needs less investment, in the case of leasing transponders, and has lower costs, and therefore, on the whole is affordable for the private sector. Until the entire cable system has become operational, between these two options, DBS remains the best carrier for both governmental and non-government broadcasters in Iran, although, from the legal and political perspectives, cable would be more reliable as it is fully controllable.

**Financing Limitations**

As described in the above paragraphs, legal and investment factors could be considered as two important blocks to privatisation. However, it seems these two barriers are no longer sustainable due to the pressures of all the new technological and
politico-economic changes, and particularly, the overall agreement of the two factions over the issue. Therefore, what remains as the most crucial question for every private or quasi-private channel is the financing issue. Basically, three conventional sources of revenue for these networks are possible; that is, subscription, advertising or a combination of both methods. To examine the strengths and weaknesses of each option, I now turn to subscription and advertising.

**Subscription**

In the event of the removal of the legal barriers, subscription is the most secure way of financing private networks in Iran today. This is mostly because of the high demand for non-government programmes, especially for entertainment. There are different options for subscription. Here one can refer to some conventional ways, such as different ways of decoding, which can be used for DBS, cable and coded terrestrial broadcasting. The problem is due to the fact that, at the present time, the national money is not a hard currency, and the fixed and current expenditures of different forms of broadcasting need to be paid in a hard currency. It is difficult to conclude therefore that this way of financing alone would sustain a network.

**Advertising**

For private channels adopting a commercial policy based on advertising in Iran would be very risky. Despite the progress of advertising in recent years through different outlets, especially wall posters and clip sheets, advertising in the VVIR is still increasing slowly. Initially, the IRI, politically, has strongly resisted being trapped into a consumerist society. This is especially the case when they still have not been able to utilise all the production potential of the economy, and, since the 1990s, foreign debts have decreased the country's purchasing power (Etelat Int. 31 October 1996). As a result of the latter, there is no surplus production to lead the producers and distributors towards advertising. According to an aide to the VVIR:

"commercialism in our country is not cost-effective to the extent that it compensates for the cost of private transmitters. For example, when there are 10 brands of vegetable oil and the
market produces more than demand, the market should compete for more sales. In this case, there is no way except the advertising of products. This is true for other commodities as well, you could say, cars, food materials and all other consumption and non-consumption materials. Therefore advertising could form where there is production surplus. In our country, at least at the present time there is no such thing, we even have to pay subsidies for production" (PI).

Moreover, although many 'South' countries have the same difficulties with advertisements, the majority of them could advertise for foreign companies, whereas until now advertising for foreign products is not acceptable in Iran. This is in spite of their presence in the Iranian market. Apart from political and economic constraints, cultural and ideological factors also do not facilitate the progress of the advertising industry. Instead they persuade people to avoid consumerism. Difficulties such as those, which have already been described, could act as a block in the way of the financing of a commercial channel. Considering the typology of television advertising programmes, in which they need more flexibility to be produced, one can evaluate the effectiveness of advertising for the private channels in Iran. According to Dr. Tabeshian:

"in countries such as America and in Europe, every ten minutes the programmes cut off for advertising. Indeed they secure their revenues through this method. Here, because of both advertisement and cultural restrictions, we could not do so. In our context we usually tried to persuade people to Ghena'at (contentment), to low consumption and to avoid Esraf (extravagance), whereas there is no such thing in other countries. That is, in our context the advertisement culture by itself is contradicted by parts of our culture, with our religious and the national culture. In any case, these are our limitations, which to some extent make it difficult to form private broadcasting" (PI).

For more insight into the limitations of the television advertising in Iran, one should have a short review of the "Regulations for Admittance and Broadcasting of Advertisement on the VVIR"\(^8^0\) in which it differentiates between ideological, cultural, economic and political aspects of the sovereign system of advertising in the country.

\(^{80}\) In Persian: Moghararat-e Pazieresh va Pakhsh-e Payamhay-e Bazargani, VVIR (the publication year is not mentioned, apparently 1995-1996).
There in the section of "General Regulations" under the title of "Program Identity", it states that

"Advertisements should be entirely subject to the all cultural regulations exercised over programme making of the VVIR in accordance with the IRI socio-economic policies. The bases of programme-making and broadcasting of the advertisements will be: full conformity with the bases and decrees of the sacred law of Islam, considered respectful for the Taghadous (sanctity) of the official religion of the country".

Moreover the noted regulations under the title of "The General Principals of Production and Broadcasting of Advertisements" emphasise the importance of work, avoidance of Esraf (extravagance), supporting domestic creativity and the avoiding comparison. Monopoly has gained special attention. To describe Esraf it has been said "being bound to avoid false needs and an emphasis on sufficiency and contentment and at the same time avoiding propaganda which leads to denying the world and isolationism, that is, Rokud (dormancy) and Rekhvate (inertia)".

Nonetheless, one should not forget that the issue is not just a matter of production surplus or cultural and ideological barriers, but that part of the difficulty stems from the weak institutionalisation of the advertising industry. In an economic sense, the Iranian market does not have an appropriate understanding of advertising and its role, since they were never practised in this way properly except for a short while during the early 1970s. In addition, it is true that, in the present economic situation, demand exceeds supply and therefore it keeps the producers and distributors free from the need to advertise. But it is also remarkable that there are still many products, and particularly services, that could secure revenue for advertisers and broadcasters. Recently, for example, hygienic materials, home appliances, food materials, cultural and education services, building materials and clothing were advertised on TV (Souroush, June -July 1995 no: 745) which has resulted in the revision the regulation and tariff on advertising.\(^{81}\) In this way, advertising could be a reliable source of revenue on condition that this industry is institutionalised.

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\(^{81}\) On tariff of ads see "The Study of Programs for Fixing Advertising Tariff". In Persian 'Barrasy-e Vazeyat-e VVIR, 1987'.
4. Channel Diversification

As explained in the previous discussions, the IRI's reaction to the DBS arose in the following sequence, from surprise to prohibition, and then slowly a move towards realistically understanding the new environment. Here, I would like to refer to the classification of one of my informant interviewees of the VVIR about the above mentioned sequence. As he alleged:

"the introduction of satellite in Iran can be divided into three stages. First, the negation phase, in which they [the regime] believed that they could overcome the difficulties created by satellite. At this stage there were three distinct groups, (a) pros, who looked at the satellite as a saviour, (b) those who were somehow related to power and feared the political impacts of satellite, and (c) the vast majority of people, curious and unaware. It was in this stage that the state took advantage of the second group and began the physical reaction which resulted in the prohibition law. The second stage was the period of knowledge about satellite from different perspectives. This knowledge, which gradually increased, helped the state to look for a useful and more effective counteraction. The establishment of the new networks were the products of this period. The third period is compatible with the new situation which is still going on" (PI).

Indeed, these sequences resulted in three approaches which are gradually forming the IRI's policies concerning the rush of satellite. The first approach was the enactment of the law for the prevention of people's access to the satellite channels. The law in fact came to stand as a sort of drawing of cultural boundaries with the global system. The second approach was to use the law to stall change and increase the time available to look for an effective and acceptable solution. The central core of this decision was the belief about the uncertainty that exists within the communication technology. In this way, it seems that from the beginning of the satellite debates and the planning for passing the law, seeking a fundamental policy was put on the agenda.

This fundamental policy exhibits a trend towards cultural oriented policies. This trend at first concluded with the revision of current cultural policies in the light of their place in the set of the country's macro policies and formed the third approach.
However, by revision the authorities did not admit to re-evaluating the fundamental notions of their previous cultural policies, instead they focused on securing the country's cultural demands in a very quantitative sense. To put it differently, the planners and decision makers realised that the cultural products were not enough to feed people's cultural needs. In one way or another, what seemed to become more important was a trend towards focusing attention on cultural matters as a turning point in the confrontation with what has been referred to as, "the cultural invasion". Now the authorities of state were convinced that "physical resistance" against the new wave of globalisation would be futile, and merely preventing citizens having access to different communication outlets would not work in the long term. Indeed the IRI has conceived that what they actually need is a sort of "cultural vaccination" to immunise people against any harm caused by foreign programmes. This notion in turn has brought about new plans and programmes which has compelled the cultural apparatus to seriously pursue the new line. The most important apparatus, which were charged with the duty of undoing the effects of the foreign satellite programmes, were respectively the VVIR and the MCIG. First, their budgets were increased and both organisations were reinforced by new financial and administrative supports. After these measures were taken, in a short time there were conspicuous developments, particularly in the VVIR. Breathing life into the VVIR from another dimension was also justifiable. Regarding our previous descriptions of the popular satellite discourse, it was continually said that the main reason for people's attraction to foreign satellites was the weakness of domestic television. This factor led the IRI to consider channel diversification. Indeed the IRI chose to make national television a substitute for foreign channels. To achieve this aim they applied different policies and considered whatever they thought would be useful, as long as it took into account their ideological and political criteria. What was lacking was sufficient insight into the different chemistry of the foreign satellite programmes and the domestic programmes. Alternatively they began to respond to the audience's demands by increasing the number of channels and broadcasting time. Put differently, they drew attention towards channel diversification rather than content
diversification, in spite of a good understanding of the importance of content diversification.

It might be relevant to believe that, in the final analysis, channel diversification, particularly when language and indigenous culture are at issue, could maintain the audiences. But apart from those who are interested in watching foreign channels no matter what, the success of such a policy depends on compromise between different patterns of programming. One salient example of such a policy can be seen in the case of Canada. When the country was first exposed to the American channels, the Canadian authorities attempted to bring back the domestic audiences by broadcasting some selected American programmes and gradually circumscribed the amount of foreign programmes in favour of domestic ones. (Hundson, 1988). In contrast, the IRI tried on passing this period with the minimum of concessions. This distinction is explicit in many of the preceding changes which are taking place under the effects of DBS, which will be described below.

**Cultural Measures**

Generally speaking, the understanding of the IRI in the new media environment can be explained according to the “cultural imperialism” perspective. The major characteristic in the understanding of cultural imperialism in the IRI, is that they conclude the main target of imperialist encroachment is to dilute people's religious beliefs. This attitude is not a unique phenomenon and is not limited to the IRI religious, cultural and political authorities, it is extremely popular in the whole Islamic world. Beyer (1994) in an analysis of the reaction of the founder of the Islamic republic against Salman Rushdi's novel, The Satanic Verses, points to the fact that in the current process of globalisation Muslims feel that they are treated negatively as an actor in world society. As he argues "what troubles them (Muslims) much more is the notion that they are being asked to surrender the core of that faith, the immutable sacredness of the Qur'an, as the price for full inclusion in a global system currently dominated by non-Muslims" (P: 3).
The logical results of this thought works directly in favour of what is perceived to be in most danger, namely religion. In this way, a short while after the ratification of the law for banning access to satellite, a new move towards what was called "strengthening the system's cultural principles" began. The new initiative was partly the result of the former critics of the prohibition law and partly exhibited the new understanding of the traditional faction. In one way or another, challenging the new wave of internationalisation of broadcasting has shifted to securing "immunisation" through "cultural vaccination". Dr Kamran, MP has pointed out that the prohibition law in the end is little more than a pain killer, and puts an emphasis on concentrating on cultural matters; in his view,

"our planners should revise their policies. Until now, the PBO has disregarded cultural questions. However, from now on, one can be hopeful, since on the one hand, the necessity of cultural enterprises has become more evident, and, on the other hand, the directorship of the organisation has been changed. If we believe a phenomenon is unlawful and its strategy is to damage the people's beliefs, then we also have to revise our policy according to the adversary's strategy and tactics. In the first and second five-year plans the cultural matters were considered important, as the titles imply, namely economic, social, and cultural development programmes, whereas in practice our contact with cultural matters was very weak. One of the reasons was that the authorities were looking for economic justifications for every move. As a result since the cultural investment is a sort of long term investment, they were reluctant to take it seriously. In my view, the authorities should not take into account the economic justifications when they are dealing with cultural affairs" (PI).

Choosing a cultural reaction as a way of bypassing the new wave of globalisation has been welcomed by many social, political and cultural circles. Even the conservative faction, who insisted on the prohibition law and finally won the prize, began to come across with the new shift in policy. The discovered solution raised controversy when every faction expressed its own understanding about what became popularly known as "cultural work" or "cultural measures". According to some of the interviewees, what has boosted these different perspectives about what culture should

82 He points to the appointment of the new advisor to the President who at the same time is the Head of the PBO.
be implemented and reinforced, is the lack of any general definition of the IRI's place in global society. Dr Azad of the VVIR emphasises:

"the lack of a correct definition of socio-historical situations sometimes leads to wrong decisions. The fact that instead of a "physical reaction" we have chosen "cultural measures" is a positive conclusion. But beforehand, we need to know where we are and where we want to go. We should re-define and determine our relationship with world society. These are the variables which help us to a better understanding of our situation. When the situation is not clear, we get lost in determining our priorities. You see how we will become helpless when we do not have a correct definition of our situation and when we have not chosen our priorities. Let me give you an example. Because of the absence of a concrete definition of the role of the media in our society, all our endeavours have come to nought on many occasions. All these attempts have not suggested any consistent thinking. You see, where our media broadcasts leisure time programmes they suggest Tanbaley (laziness), Loudegey (clownishness), Lashey (faintness) and Be'haley (listlessness), whereas in news programmes they suggest Tondey (rapidity) and Teyzey (sharpness). When they come to education they suggest Ta'khasos (proficiency). These are not parallel and in step with each other. A person who watches television from the afternoon until late at night is exposed to three different and even contradictory views" (PI).

A comparison between Dr Azad's argument about the current situation of the radio and television and what Aweni, a TV programme editor, had said in 1992, indicates the limited range of attitude change in the cultural and media environment. He alleged that:

"still we have not come to a decisive conclusion as to what is television in an Islamic system. Its quality and its relation with religion and the Islamic state has remained covert. The problems of how to deal with television from the fiqh point of view is not clear yet, from small problems, such as the presentation of music for enjoyment, to big ones. Still there are individuals in this country who believe the Islamic system, whether by nature or by accident, does not need television at all and even if there is such a necessity, it is secondary" (Ghods-e Khorasan, 25 February 1994 & Majles and Pajouhesh, September-October 1994: 39 no: 11).

While these arguments, to a great extent, address the dilemmas that the cultural and media institutions are faced with, one should bear in mind that the IRI has defined its place in new global order even before seizing the power. Coincidentally, the dilemmas stem from the firm definition of the IRI's place in world context, where it is not in step with the new global developments. This is rooted in the lack of realistic
understanding of the world development, which in practice creates tension. Ideally the IRI tries to maintain its own particularities through religio-political sovereignty. Due to globalisation, this is a task that is difficult if not impossible to achieve. The so-called "cultural measures" which have been adopted as a new cultural policy are a collection of some quantitative solutions, without addressing the national and global realities as the bases of such a modification. Dr. Tabeshian described the above noted concept as follows:

"what this concept actually means is to invest in a cultural domain more than before. Diversification of programmes in the light of securing audiences' rights should be enlarged and the number of radio and television channels should be increased. This development should not only deal with radio and television, but also it should cover cinema, press and publications. That is a kind of antitoxin to confront the poison of foreign programmes. Solutions such as jamming are no longer reliable, even so, whatever its range, whether geographical or chronological, it needs investment as well, so it would be better to invest in cultural matters" (PI).

The new guideline in a broad sense is targeted at youngsters' problems; employment, sport and public culture. In this way attention has been drawn to the quantitative development of press, radio and television, even to an extent that has been criticised by many observers. One of the popular criticisms, which has been noted in an article by Mohsenian-Rad (1994), emphasised that increasing broadcasting time and starting new channels would be futile without giving a clear identity and role to television. In response to such a criticism, Dr. Pournejati, one of the WIR deputies, has stated that "the pivotal policy of the VVIR is the quantitative extension of these programmes. But we are not going to sacrifice quality for quantity" (Abrar, 1 September 1994) However, it seems the quality of programmes is not the priority of the regime. What until now is perceived as quality, by the IRI authorities, mainly refers to technical expertise or the origin of the scripts, rather than a move towards diversification of programmes which reflect the audience's needs. Altogether, according to the new approach, one can conclude that the "cultural measures" guideline, at least for television, is principally the same as before. To avoid exaggeration one can point to the fact that, until now, none of the nation-wide and provincial channels could
deal with the existing difficulties, such as the broadcasting of music, reflecting people's points of view about different ranges of social issues and addressing the social and cultural diversity of the society. More importantly the youngsters' difficulties with unemployment, leisure time and sex still remain taboo. Indeed, if cultural modification was designed to reverse "cultural invasion", it must be expected to exhibit the audiences' real demands to the extent that there is no need of any rivals.

To implement such measures at the first stage, the annual (current and development) budget for the mass communication and information sector, telecommunication, education and sport, was increased dramatically. For instance, in the mass communication and information sector only the current expenditure was increased from 192.2 billion Rials for the First Five Year Plan to 1758.4 billion Rials for the Second Five Year Plan.\(^3\) By the same token the development expenditure of 45 billion Rials was raised to 847.2 billion Rials in the Second Five Year Plan (Table 7). These sums do not cover private enterprise, private savings, the contribution of the banking system and foreign currency budget. In this way, in the Second Plan the budget of the VVIR increased to a total of 2605.6 billion Rials\(^4\). This indicates that in comparison with the First Five Year Plan in which only 237.2 billion Rials had been allocated for both current and development expenditures, the total budget for the VVIR in the Second Plan was increased by about 11 times. Subsequently, besides the allocated budget, other provisions of the Second Five Year Plan paid special attention to the VVIR by allocating more concessions. Based on Note 19 of the Second Five Year Plan, the VVIR and other cultural sectors were exempt from the increase in the tariff of water and electricity during the Second Plan. This means that from 1995 until 1999 the VVIR will not pay the increased rate. What makes this important is that the VVIR

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\(^3\) On this see:

\(^4\) According to Arabi Moghadam the VVIR chief accountant, the exact figure is 2666 billion Rials (Didar, the internal publication of VVIR, Autumn 1374/1995 no: 3).
expenditure for electricity has been estimated to be 600 million Rials. Note 56 obliged
the government to deduct 0.3% off both current and development expenditure of all
government bodies, except for the education and defence sectors, in favour of the
following: the VVIR 60%, the MCIG plus the Cultural Heritage Organisation (CHO)
and the IPO 30% and the Institution of Editing and Publication of Imam Khomaini
Literary Works 10%. Based on Note 59, the taxes on domestically produced or
imported colour television sets, which had for more than twenty years remained fixed,
was increased. This tax is collected for the VVIR. According to this Note the
producers who do not pay their tax at the appropriate time will receive up to a 30% fine.
In addition, based on Note 3 of the annual budget for 1994 and 1995, the VVIR has
received 30 billion Rials to increase the activity of the private sector in programme-
making through Seyma Film, which will continue. According to Note 16 of the 1995
budget, 9 billion Rials were allocated for the extension of Network 3. Based on Note
55 of the 1994 the annual budget of 20.4 billion and the same Note for the 1995
budget, 18 billion Rials were allocated for the VVIR to make suitable programmes by
way of campaigning against "cultural invasion". Also based on Note 59 of the law for
the 1995 budget, every electricity meter, except for agricultural usage and rural areas,
Mosques, Takaya (theatres for passion play) and those who use less than 150 K/W
electricity per month, should pay 500 Rials as a subscription to the VVIR every month.
This subscription fee is collected by the Ministry of Energy on behalf of the VVIR. In
addition, there are some other concessions for all the cultural organisations including
the VVIR, such as exemption from the bureaucratic process of importing materials, an
exemption from Note 29 of the law of the 1995 budget in which all the country's
apparatus including the VVIR, are obliged to pay for the differences in the currency rate
they have received during the past several years with the floating exchange rate. In this
case, the VVIR should have paid 72 billion Rials only for 1995-1996 (1374-1375) but
were exempted. According to Ahmadian, from the financial section of the VVIR, to
increase this budget they had to explain in detail the coverage situation of foreign

85 Ibid.
satellites, they compared the financial status of radio and television before and after the revolution, and explain the goals of the plan and schedule of the VVIR's campaign against "cultural invasion" to the representative of Majles. As he emphasised "these privileges were unprecedented in the history of the VVIR." It is also worth emphasising that the MCIG and other cultural organisations did not remain without a share. For instance, Note 51 of the Law for the First Five Year Plan has licensed the MCIG to take back all amounts coming from tourism, cultural and artistic activities collected in the general treasury for promoting cultural activities. Again in 1994, Majles allocated 1% of the budget for the whole country to the MCIG to utilise it for the campaign against "cultural invasion". Plus it was announced that based on a Majles regulation, 2% of most factories' profits is allocated to the cultural section. Part of this credit is allotted to the Ministry of Education and other parts for the MCIG (Kayhan, 27 July 1994). Two months before, 1% of the municipality's revenue was also allocated for the same purpose and apparently for the same ministries (Jahan-e Islam, 23 May 1994).

Media Abundance

Despite their likenesses, the first network was basically for information and the second network could be mainly recognised by its entertainment, educational and artistic features. Although both networks counted as nation-wide networks, until the 1990s, the second network still did not have full coverage throughout the country. They were also different in the duration of their broadcasting, that is, Network 1 in production and broadcasting was streets ahead. The situation has changed since early 1993, by addition of new networks. In this way, during recent years, the third channel which was aimed at the broadcasting of entertainment programmes was inaugurated. The establishment of the third channel was accompanied by heated debates. At the beginning the authorities of the VVIR spoke about a childrens' and youngsters' channel. Then it was said the new channel would be allocated to sport, or the re-

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86 Ibid.
87 On this see; Table 7, Culture and Art column.
broadcasting of foreign satellite programmes. Finally, by mixing all these wishes the new network was born and titled 'Network 3' without adding any specifications. The new channel indeed, has targeted the above mentioned groups and mainly works as an entertainment channel for youngsters. Later on, in 1995 the "provincial network" was formed. Since this network was sponsored by Tehran Municipality it was also called "Fellow Citizen Channel" and sometimes channel or Network 5. A provincial network is not new in Iran; during the past years many provinces have had their own network through which they were able to broadcast a limited number of hours of local programmes, and mainly the channel 1 nation-wide news. But the novelty of 'provincial channels' apparently is related to the fact that, for the first time, Tehran with a population of more than 11,000,000, that is about one fifth of the whole country's population, have access to locally oriented programmes. Until that time, a limited amount of local programmes were broadcast for the city and the whole province by Network 2. Also at this stage it was decided to implement the former project of allocating one network to every province. In the new mood, these networks will to some extent enjoy autonomy, furthermore they will be responsible for securing their own finance. Dr. Tabeshian regarded the provincial networks as a substitute for private networks. In his own words "the provincial networks which have relative independence and rely on local revenue and human resources, can be a replacement for the notion of a private network" (PI). Above all, there is still not a clear idea about the role and function of these channels. As Ekram-e Jafari of the VVIR has pointed out "one of the organisation's problems is the lack of any definition for the provincial networks and their duties (Seda va Seyma, 1994 no. 200). In 1996, Network 4 for broadcasting scientific content was established. The establishment of this channel was also a response to the promise of the early days of satellite popularisation in which the authorities had promised to re-broadcast some acceptable and useful programmes. In any case, broadcasting some satellite programmes does not mean the afore-mentioned channel are only fed by these programmes. The major proportion of this channel's programmes is produced domestically. These consist of educational and scientific
round tables, documentaries, conferences, news and so on. Because of these recent developments, Iranians in every part of the country have access to two nation-wide channels and one provincial channel which will gradually increase to four nation-wide and one provincial channel. In addition since 1995/1374, Shabake-ye Dour Negar (a teletext network) has begun its experimental operation. This channel shows some handy information, advertising and some sayings from popular works. Although still distinguishing between channel 1 and 2 from the programme point of view is difficult, channel 3 and 4 have clear themes and exhibit a discernible identity. However, these channels sometimes repeat each other's programmes and damage their programming identity.

There is also the increasing amount of programme production by each network. Here the question is, how the VVIR has been able to do so? According to Dr. Azad:

"the increase is partly related to the new investment and partly rooted in the contribution of the private sector. Nevertheless one should not forget changes in human resources management which have recently been applied to the organisation to increase its efficiency" (PI).

Whereas others relate the growth to the low quality of the programmes that have been produced. After the inauguration of channel 3, daily Kayhan in one of a series of reports about the quality of the campaign against satellite, wrote:

"television (Network 1) around 4 PM begins its programmes, some of them are repeated, some are dull...Network 2 is the same and Network 3 will be just the same. They repeat sport matches, repeat documentaries and series which only after a short while will be re-broadcast! solid news which lacks visual presentation, the superficial words of presenters and some game shows in which there is nothing more to watch than round tables without any movement or action lacking pictures, lacking any clips ..." (Kayhan, 15 May 1996).

To illustrate the progress, it is worth emphasising that the production of programmes in 1993, compared with the year before, increased more than 1100 hours (6%), and this figure increased to 3000 hours (28%) for 1994, in comparison with 1993. This shows the maximum effort of the VVIR regarding its existing organisational, financial and equipment capacity. Domestic production secures up to
50% of the whole demand of the networks (broadcasting). To secure the rest of the demand, the VVIR tries to reinforce its infrastructure measures and is preparing the ground for more participation of independent producers. However securing about 50% of the domestic broadcasting needs is a good record, since, in the modern era of media abundance, no country can reach self sufficiency (Table 8).

Equal progress has also happened in broadcasting. In this regard, in 1993/1372 in comparison with 1992, there was a 6% increase and in 1994, by comparison with 1993, about 30%. This rate decreased to 7% in 1995 and probably remained the same for 1996, because of human resources and software limitations. As said earlier, domestic production secures up to 50% of the broadcasting. Regarding the differences between production and broadcasting, it is important to know how this vacuum is filled. As pointed out earlier, part of the remaining hours are filled by foreign programmes. However foreign programmes only secure 1/3 of the remaining time. Although there is little information about the amount of foreign programmes, based on a statistic for two months of 1374 (December-January 1995-1996)\(^8\) foreign programmes had only secured 19% of the networks broadcasting time (Table 9). According to the same source among the broadcasted programmes at that time, 66% of the programmes were new and 34% were repeated (Table 10). In this way a considerable proportion of broadcasting time was filled by repeated programmes\(^9\).

5. Structural Change in the Iranian Media Industry

Naturally it was expected that the latest developments would have made outstanding changes in the managerial and organisational structure of the VVIR. But as evidence shows the impacts were not as much as expected. As Karthigesu (1994) argues, the new media environment has led many countries towards commercialisation or democratisation in Asian countries, with fundamental changes in their organisation. Nevertheless, efforts to keep a monopoly has limited the extent of change in areas of

\(^8\) Azar-Day 1374.
\(^9\) On this see: Operation Report of Ten Month Production and Broadcasting of the VVIR and the Monthly Activities of all the Organisation Sectors for 1994. Published by the VVIR.
management, organisational structure, ownership and the normative patterns of the VVIR. Here one can categorise the recent limited changes around several axis. To effectively direct the organisation, the VVIR has established new deputies, namely Seyma (television) deputy and extraterritorial deputy. In the past, the main division of labour in the VVIR was based on production and broadcasting. According to Dr Pournejati "since that experience has not succeeded they planned for a new chart" (Souroush, September-October 1994). In the new plan, each deputy has its own headquarters and the networks enjoy autonomy. Given the new terms, it has been supposed that every network will have its own production and programme making company. Here instead of the former production general office, there will be production companies that perform under the supervision of the network director and will also observe government company regulations. In addition, since securing foreign programmes will to increase, all transactions related to these programmes, whether series, movies, documentaries or others, will be concentrated in the office of 'securing foreign programmes'. Also there is a plan in which the VVIR directorship has decided to give more authority to the middle managers amongst the provincial directors. (Seda Va Seyma, July-August 1994 no: 200). The same can be said to divide the VVIR based on inland and extraterritorial radio and television which will be discussed in the following sections.

6. Promotion of the Media Industry

DBS and cable policies in most countries around the world, can generally divided into cultural and industrial policies, or a combination of them. The characteristics of these policies have been explained in Chapters III and IV. In general, as McQuail (1995) puts it, the more cultural the policy is the more tendency there is to hold back from rapid change. The more industrial it is, the more enthusiasm exists to encourage change. Here we can add, that the priority between different policies is no longer only a matter of selection for the sovereign states, since the new communication technology and the globalisation of communication is intervening in every aspect of
communication. In this regard, those countries which insist on exercising a single policy, encounter the serious dilemma of how much they have to pay for their approach. More explicitly than other countries, the IRI is one of the places in which its main concern over the media, as a whole, and electronic media in particular, is viewed culturally. After the internationalisation of broadcasting, the insufficiency of this cultural model became evident when the authorities stopped the production of satellite equipment by the prohibition law. Here, if we do not limit the issue to the production of satellite reception equipment, we will see that the new media environment stimulates a new trend towards developing the audio-visual and information industry as a whole. It has also helped to illuminate both the cultural and industrial dimensions of policy making. Before describing the above mentioned process, it is worthwhile making it clear what this concept means in the current discussion.

According to McQuail (1994) the media industry refers to a chain of production processes, content selection, audience selection and technological innovation. As far as our discussion is concerned, all these processes are taking place in Iran today, as described earlier or will be discussed later. Here I want to put the emphasis on that part of the media industry which McQuail points to as technological innovation and, I refer to it as the promotion of the technology of the media. The very concept of the technology of the media consists of those sorts of equipment that Fisk (1982) deliberately calls "Mechanical Media". To have a clear look at Fisk's differentiation, it would be better to turn to his whole classification (Watson & Hill, 1994: 116) where he divides media into three categories: (1) The presentational media: the voice, face, body; the spoken words, gesture, where the medium is actually the communicator (2) Representational media: books, painting, photographs, etc. Using cultural and aesthetic conventions 'to create a "text" of some sort'; they become independent of the communicator, being works of communication (whereas presentational media are acts of communication). (3) Mechanical media: telephone, radio, TV, film, etc., which are transmitters of 1 and 2. Henceforth my concern will be to address the situation and
progress of mechanical media, mainly electronic media in the Iranian context, since the 1990s.

At the beginning of foreign satellite broadcasting, the reception equipment was all imported from abroad. Because of this, business was very lucrative, and soon domestic producers became involved in the production of such equipment. According to the press, until that time, at least eight electronic companies had been licensed for some time to produce reception equipment, some of them in mass production (Gozaresh Monthly, April-May 1994 no. 39). Circulation of this news extended the debates about satellite to a wider realm and compelled the government to emphasise that these factories had been licensed only to export their products. Although the announcement was confirmed by some of the entrepreneurs involved, and they denied selling reception equipment in the domestic markets, they began criticising the existing restrictions on the industry. What fuelled the criticism was the ever increasing instances of foreign transactions which continued as before. Domestic producers were claiming that until that time about half a million US $ had gone for buying illegally imported satellite dishes at the cost of domestic products, and there was still the equivalent of billions of US Dollars as a demand in the market (Ibid.). Meanwhile, it was revealed by the press that the production of satellite dishes was not limited to the big and licensed factories, since many workshops not only produced dishes, but also had begun the assembling of receivers. As time went by the press began reporting the exposure of workshops every day in which they actually produced this equipment. These incidents directly affected the suggested plan for the prohibition of satellite access, which was arranged by the representatives of Majles. Making appeals for the banning of domestic production of satellite equipment prepared the ground for heated debates during the Marathon. This issue was damaging one of the most important slogans of the revolution, that is, supporting domestic production, or in a wider context, self-sufficiency. One of the critics of the suggestion was the PTT minister who was participating in the Marathon as the representative of the government. What worried him were the dozens of plans

\footnote{On this see: Iranian newspapers during the time being studied e.g. Hamshahri 25 December 1994.}
which the PTT and the Telecommunication Company of Iran (TCI) as the main producers of communication equipment in the country, were supervising or had undertaken to establish, some for the production of cable and satellite equipment. However, in the end, the relevant part of Article 1 which was asking for a ban on this kinds of production, was omitted. Later on, Article 4 of 'executive regulation' which was arranged and put into force by the government, to a limited extent allowed domestic factories to manufacture satellite related products based on the country's needs and through official contracts with the VVIR and the PTT. Although the producers became excluded, because of the prohibitions pointed out in Articles 8 and 9, and were exempt from the intervention of the Interior Ministry during these contracts, in the end they were deprived of access to a very lucrative market *(Hamshahri, 22 April 1995)* & Appendix 2. In any case, the law presented domestic producers of such a equipment with difficulties, despite the ever expanding progress of this industry. Indeed this part of the prohibition law remained as its most vulnerable part, since the law could be exercised without any restriction against the industry. If people did not care about the prohibition law they could easily gain access to a black market offering foreign equipment. In response to the argument that the law has restricted this industry, I found two distinct reactions from the relevant authorities. The first reaction actually denied any damage has resulted from the prohibition law. They believed one should not take seriously the loss of the small producer, since they thought the bases of this industry has been formed by some big factories. For instance, Dr. Tabeshian argued that:

"the fact that the law has damaged the unprofessional part of this industry, that is those producers who were assembling some devices in a primitive way, might be true. But in reality the professional part of the industry, not only has not been damaged, but also it has been encouraged and supported. At the present time the PTT and the VVIR and their joint companies in the private sector are very active in this field. What the workshops were making were some unprofessional equipment for home recipients, which is different with the foundation of an industry which could produce professional equipment"*(PI).*
By 'professional part' of the industry Dr Tabeshian was pointing to the big factories, mainly TCI and Takta, in which they produce the above mentioned equipment utilised by the VVIR and the PTT for transmission purposes. The question is why the production of millions of dishes could not build the bases of an industry whereas the production of a limited number of the same equipment was able to do that? Nevertheless Dr. Tabeshian hoped expansion of telecommunication and data networks would save the industry through increasing the consumption of these devices. In his own words, "increasing data networks will increase production of media technologies. For instance, for the transmission of data between banks we need more than two thousands stations which in the end will be equipped by domestic products" (PI).

The second group totally denied the importance of this industry, especially when the culture was in danger. According to Dr, Haddad-e Adel, one of the former VVIR directors, "economic results are not worth enough to offer our religious values for them" (PI). By the same token, Talebzadeh of the MCIG justified the existing restrictions on this industry as follows:

"in an Islamic society drinking wine is haram, here if we have a productive vineyard, religion does not allow us to produce wine. This is true as well for that part of the media industry which is related to satellite reception equipment. These antenna bring anxiety and alienation to the families and mixes the boundaries. One should not forget that we shifted the Pakdis and Argues production line despite the fact that we could make a very lucrative business by exporting their products" (PI).

Such an interpretation was conveyed to the newly formed industry. In response to the question what will finally happen to the existing producers, it has been said that, if they could complete an official contract with the governmental organisations, they could continue, otherwise they have to switch to other products. Moreover in a report in Alborz weekly magazine (22 September 1994), the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance in reaction to the question of "what is the proper course to pursue about the

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91 Sherkate Tahghighat va Toulied Vsayele Electoronic (Takta). The Company of Research and Production of Electronic Equipment as one of the companies belonging to the VVIR produces electronic devices, antenna, transmitters and so on... (VVIR yearly report for 1994).

92 Two factories which before revolution producing different alcoholic drinks. Now they are producing industrial and medical alcohol, fruit juice and alcohol free beer.
factories that officially have been licensed from the Ministry of Industry for such products?" said:

"the Ministry of Industry has done a very great job to give these factories licences, since they have lead to the reinforcement of domestic products. But since the final function of these products currently has made some difficulties, it is better they begin manufacturing other products. In any case they should cease producing these products".

In one way or another, manufacturing satellite reception equipment, at least until now, could not be fruitful, and therefore the country has not only lost a great chance to lay the foundation for one of the main corner-stones of the future broadcasting industry and its economic fruits, but it has also prepared an appropriate basis for the escape of billions of Rials of foreign currency. Considering the lack of any activity related to cablecasting, a vacuum of development in the broadcasting industry remains as a problem for now and the future. This is despite the fact that there is the appropriate grounds for the development of this industry in Iran, whether materially or from the human resources aspects, since the country enjoys many specialists in the electronic field. Indeed, the Iranian media policy makers still do not want to exercise economic considerations with regard to new developments in communication.

Although the reaction towards manufacturing satellite receivers was negative, at the same time manufacturing telecommunication and information equipment, as well as audio visual materials, has captured the attention of the relevant authorities. Basically the situation for the production of electronic media facilities in Iran is not at all good and domestic consumption of these facilities mainly relies on foreign products. In this way, except for some limited brands of radio, television and tape recorders which were licensed by foreign companies before the Revolution, the country is not very productive in this field. It is not surprising that suddenly, during the last few years, the amount of production of radio, television and tape recorders has increased and initiatives to make new outlets have been planned. For example, there is a plan under way to produce VCRs. However the past limitations and difficulties still work as barrier to progress in the audio visual industry. According to Sa'yard of the Ministry of Industry:
"the Ministry currently has issued licenses for several companies to manufacture VCRs and these companies are negotiating with their foreign counterparts to receive ‘know-how’ knowledge ... to produce this product there are several problems to be overcome, it is still not clear what organisation is going to distribute these products. Also the speed of change through new innovation in this industry is too fast, which makes it difficult to compete with international producers. In any case recent negotiation over this product with foreign companies based on 49-51 is going on." (Abrar, 20 April 1994).

Moreover new attempts to produce audio and video tapes are now underway. Despite mass consumption of these materials for different purposes, until recently the country did not produce any, despite the petrochemical strength of the country for making such products. Nevertheless, recently several companies have begun producing audio and video tape. As another measure, one can refer to a new plant for the production of CDs. On June 11, 1996, a compact disc (CD) manufacturing plant was inaugurated. The plant has the production capacity of 5.5 million compact discs a year, set up at a total cost of 7.30 billion Rials plus $ 4.95 million (Ettela’at Int. 13 June 1996).

Altogether, different ideas about different sectors of communication have resulted in different outcomes. For instance, in comparing audio visual and broadcasting with telecommunications, the speed of change in the telecommunication industry is fascinating. To explain the reasons for this difference, a spectrum of factors should be considered. These factors range from the support of H. Rafsanjani, the President, who was very keen in the development of the telecommunication industry and services, to the outlook of the entire state regarding the significance of telecommunications (Jahan-e Islam, 10 July 1994). These supports have had a very positive effect on the activities of this sector, particularly when one takes into consideration the role of M. Gharazi, the PTT Minister, who is also very interested in the progress of telecommunication and its related industries. However, the main reason is that, unlike broadcasting, the IRI perspective on telecommunication is mostly...
industrial and economic. This point has indeed increased the flexibility of telecommunication. Peirzadeh of Majles and a member of Telecommunication and Energy put its view about the case as follows:

"from the law and regulation perspective the PTT (telecommunication) is only considered as a connector, that means they are only charged with the duty to connect the sender and the receiver. The PTT do not intervene in the transmitted message whether it is transmitted by telephone, facsimile or other carriers. They do not bother with the content of the message being exchanged. Whereas the VVIR or basically the radio and television, is categorically interested in any content, here the carrier is not important; what is important is the message and its implications" (PI).

Such a perspective has kept telecommunication away from strict control, so it enjoys more autonomy, and therefore more progress.

7. The Internationalisation of Broadcasting

Despite disagreements with international broadcasters due to the quality of their programmes the IRI is prepared to participate in international broadcasting. This trend recently developed in two different ways. Firstly, through the establishment and reinforcement of an extraterritorial network, and secondly, thorough a comprehensive plan for international broadcasting.

**Extraterritorial Deputy**

To manage extraterritorial broadcasting, the VVIR has initially established a new assistant body, namely the 'extraterritorial deputy', in 1993. The mission of this unit has been defined as follows:

"Securing production resources and broadcasting radio and television programmes as well as the provision and broadcasting of news to propagate and introduce the Islamic revolutionary culture and its success along with the history, culture and the natural beauties of Iran; communication between Muslim nations through introducing them to each other; reflecting the news of the Islamic world and the global movement of Islam; encounters with non-Islamic cultures in the Islamic world and disclosures about Zionism"95.

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95 On this and other developments related to the extraterritorial deputy see: Iran Bar Bal-e Amvaj [Iran on frequencies wing] (Sourosh, June-July 1995 no: 743).
The extraterritorial secretary supervises *Seymay-e Bouron Marzi* (extraterritorial television) and *Saday-e Bouron Marzi*. (extraterritorial radio). Although from the organisational point of view the extraterritorial deputy is accounted for as a new unit and indeed, for the purpose of its establishment is a boost to visual broadcasting, both subordinate sections especially the radio, were active for many years. What has changed since the 1990s, has been the number of radio stations and television channels, the range of broadcasting, and the amount and the length of programmes.

**Extraterritorial Television**

The extraterritorial television network was established during the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in 1981, by broadcasting in the Arabic language. After the war, according to the new policies, this network was charged with new duties and, in comparison with the first term, to some extent developed. Since 1992, by adding a new programme in Turkish-Azari (Caucasian), the number of extraterritorial programmes has increased to two. The coverage of areas of Arabic language consists of the Persian Gulf territory and the Lebanon, and for the Azari programme is the Nkhichevan and Azarbayjan Republics, the two Northern neighbours of Iran. Political, socio-cultural and religious issues can be considered as the main focus of these programmes (Table 11).

**Extraterritorial Radio**

The extraterritorial radio until recently broadcasted 21 programmes in 21 languages. These programmes and languages consist of English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Armenian, Bosnia, Pustu, Urdu, Bangali, Sorani Kurdish, North Kurdish, Arabic, Assyria(n), Swahili, Caucasian Turkish, Istanbul Turkish, Uzbek, Tadzhiki, Turkman and Dare. The programmes are broadcast from Tehran and other major cities, mainly from frontier cities. More recently, two other programmes are broadcast for some African countries (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Mali, Ghana, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo) and South East Asian countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore and Thailand) respectively in Hausa and the Malay language.
length of programmes broadcast from Tehran until June-July 1995 was 47 hours, and for other stations broadcasting from other cities, was 16 hours per day (VVIR Yearly Reports 1991-1994. Souroush Publisher).

Towards International Broadcasting

During 1995-1996, besides extraterritorial television, new debates have formed around the establishment of an international network. The notion is rooted in several factors: such as the feasibility of international broadcasting which can be counted as the main grounds for such a decision; as already described there is the mission of the extraterritorial secretary, and also the IRI perspective to have its own say in the new global dialogue despite its position against international broadcasting. They always supported the reverse process, that is, to take advantage of the new opportunities to spread their socio-political perspective and Islamic divine matters abroad. This intention to utilise satellite for international broadcasting was concretely exhibited in Ayatollah Azari Qomi's fatwa about it being haram to watch foreign satellite programmes, where he remarked:

"...it is the duty of the Islamic government and all our enthusiastic fellow countrymen to do combat with this instrument of debauchery (satellite). However, there is no doubt that we must use this technology to convey Islam and the revolution and the luminous Quranic verses without giving permission to others to use these instruments for threatening Islam and the Islamic Government" (Kayhan, 22 May 1994).

Based on such a background and other necessities since 1994, some different views about the contribution of the IRI along with other Islamic countries to the establishment of an international network were published. Javad-e Ansari, the Iranian Ambassador to Brunei, announced that "Muslims should have their own satellite" and invited the Islamic countries to contribute to an Islamic satellite network (Etela'at Int., 6 October 1994). In addition, Ghanavati, the member of the Islamic Guidance and Art Commission of Majles in an interview about satellite and "the law for the prohibition of satellite access", in response to a question about the provision of a tailor-made satellite, put it thus:
"in the guide lines of the Second Five Year Development Plan and in its Note 23, an international Islamic network has explicitly been addressed. However without any reference to a tailor-made satellite. The preference is mainly to lease satellite channels more than having an independent satellite. Plus, it has been emphasised that the extraterritorial network of the VVIR should be expanded. The allocated credit for such a plan will surely be considered in 1374/1995 budget. This is because both Majles and PBO agree upon the plan. It is worth mentioning that initially it was planned to broadcast via Seymay-e Souroush (Souroush television) over America and Canada, but altogether we found that we do not have enough audiences there. Therefore we decided to allocate the programmes of the Souroush international network to the Islamic and other regional countries and gradually expand it" (Hamshahri, 21 September 1994).

In any case, until October 1996, the news of the establishment of this network whether independently or with the collaboration of other Islamic countries, every now and then was published by the press. On the above noted date, the Bulletin of the Centre for Arab and Iranian Studies quoted from Mr Bouranjani, an aide to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), that:

"the Islamic Republic is planning to establish an international Islamic network with the help of Russia and Sweden". And he added "the organisation is currently negotiating with owners of satellite networks to lease channels. It is also formulating the necessary plans to create content and acquire the equipment needed for the new network ... Iran is negotiating with Russian and Sweden for technical assistance. The new network will give special importance to broadcasting satellite programmes about the traditions of Islamic society".

The absence of any reference to collaboration with other countries in Mr Bouranjani's remarks exhibited that the IRI is more determined and single minded to realise such a decision through an independent project. Basically, any attempt to conclude a joint project with other Islamic countries from the beginning was an immature thought, since at the present time, apart from the IRI, none of the Islamic countries are enthusiastic enough to establish a religious channel. In addition, given the fact that there are such countries, the existence of different understandings of Islam, and the different political view-points rarely allows the continuation of any such co-ordination. This is despite the fact that the IRI is very flexible on this point, since in such a circumstance, they always put the emphasis on common Islamic principals shared by other branches of
Islam. Moreover, politically the global issues that stimulate other countries, e.g. the Islamic countries, to participate in international broadcasting does not necessarily conform with the IRI's perception of new global developments. To demonstrate how different the expectations of different Islamic countries are, one can refer to the fact that the television programmes of some Arab countries, located in the Persian Gulf territory, and receivable in Southern Iran is evaluated negatively by the IRI, despite the fact that those are Muslim countries. However, attempts to operate with other countries, particularly with the regional countries, is highly recommended by some scholars and experts, under the given condition that these endeavours could work for the best interests of the participants. Such a corporation definitely needs to be free from any ideological, political and cultural hegemony. This sort of co-operation, on the one hand, helps to overcome the offence of international broadcasters, and on the other hand, it decreases the amount of capital needed for investment and other expenditures, as well as overcoming the problem of content production.

Decisions about international broadcasting can be seen in the light of two factors. Firstly, the current outlook of the IRI authorities, and secondly, the record of satellite broadcasting and the measures which have been taken in the past until now, and more specifically, the attempts to access a tailor-made satellite. Dealing with the first point, one can argue that despite the agreement between political authorities about the utilisation of satellite to catch the international audiences, one should not forget that those who advise such a move were indeed divided between two groups based on their understanding of new developments. The first group's aim was to use this method of broadcasting for the propagation of Islam. From their perspective the technology, indeed, has paved the way to ascertain the historical Islamic wish, that is, to expand divine thoughts and remove ugliness from the earth. An example of this thought can be heard from Hujjat-al-Islam Mahmmoid Hashemi, the spokesman of the Encyclopaedia of Shi'ite fiqh, where he gave an interpretation of the utilisation of satellite dishes. As he stressed:
"the Islamic Republic and all Islamic governments should use this outlet (satellite), whether by lease or by purchase. In debates about the diffusion of Islam as a school of thought, we believe that every human being who lives on the earth should be familiar with the Islamic precepts. We should Amer-e be ma'roof va nahy-a az mon'kar ('promote virtue and prevent sins') and invite people to Islam. This is a vital issue and perhaps one of the methods of Jihad is the propaganda jihad. In any case we must utilise these facilities" (Resalat, 17 July 1994).

According to an informant from the VVIR:

"this tendency towards utilising satellite is the feature of the third stage of satellite in our society which is going to get serious attention ...Currently the authorities think that international broadcasting can be an appropriate channel to express their ideas, it may change their attitude towards satellite drastically" (Pl).

The second perspective was expressed by Islamic technocrats and high ranking administrators. As they believe, being active in international broadcasting helps to keep in step with global developments. Although this perspective and the theocratic perspective finally come to a common end, the departure point of their understanding of the issue is very different. This difference can be seen in phrases which they use. For instance, Dr. Azad of the VVIR argued that:

"in the new situation the possibility of making two-way information flow has increased. Thus, it is logically more acceptable for the world to see the global broadcasting of regional and local issues. Now, if we do not use this opportunity it shows something is wrong with us, ourselves. At the moment the question is not if we go, they [foreign countries and mega companies] will come, they have come, they have made their contribution and, if you wish, their interference, so why do we not go and make our presence felt? Our absence did not solve any problems" (Pl).

Such concerns are shared by many communication experts. They recommend that the only way to remain in step with the new global caravan is to actively participate in it. In the case of Iran, this approach has been advised to the Iranian authorities by John Coxon, the Sky network political analyst, and some Iranian scholars, such as Majid

\[96\] In other words, direct others to do what is laid down by religious law and prohibit them from what is prohibited by the shari'a.

\[97\] Struggle in defence of Islam; interior struggle against evil inclinations; external war against non-Muslims (Fischer & Abedi (1990)).
Tehranian\textsuperscript{98}. John Coxon, in a conference which was held in Alma Ati, the capital of Kazakhstan, in a discussion about satellite and the proper course for countries like Iran, recommended:

"as India, regarding its rich culture, tries to digest the invasion of frequencies by absorbing the positive sides and repelling the negative aspects, Iran can also pursue such a goal by using the modern carriers of transmission, amongst them satellite. Iran can build its own Islamic satellite network and feed Muslim countries (Quoted from Hamshahri, 1 August 1994 in CSRPE no: 41).

For more clarification of the attitude of the second group it is worth turning to Dr Tabeshian's remarks about the necessity of a contribution to international broadcasting, as he strongly expressed "no doubt about participating in this domain. We should use this as a bridgehead for expressing ourselves and our culture. We should use every legitimate international channel. If we react passively we will lose" (PI). In any case, the VVIR is now making preparations for international broadcasting. According to the deputy of the VVIR organisation, "broadcasting from the Seyma International Network will began from late March 1997. The network is programmed to broadcast 20 hours out of every 24 hours and will cover America, Asia, Africa and the European continent" (Ettela'at Int. 8 January 1997).

Not only, are the new developments, especially the feasibility of internationalisation of broadcasting, stimulating the IRI to broadcast internationally, but also, the very background of satellite broadcasting in Iran supports this trend. The fact is that Iran was one of the pioneers of satellite broadcasting in Asia. One of the reasons for this pioneering is the geographical size of the country (by 1,648,000 ksq., the sixteenth largest in the world) which makes satellite cost effective for broadcasting and for other forms of transmission throughout the country. In other words, if Iran wants to have full transmission coverage over the country, there is no way except by exploiting satellite. Disregarding visual broadcasting, the transmission of other sources, such as, voice and data to thousands of remote villages, scattered islands and

\textsuperscript{98} Speech in CSRPE, (CSRPE no. 41).
impassable mountains areas, requires the installation of many huge antenna or underground cable, which is not only difficult but also very expensive.

In this regard, in 1969, Iran became the member of the international telecommunication organisation (INTELSAT). According to Sreberny Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994):

"From quite early on in its establishment, the NIRT was involved with international broadcasting. In October 1969, it started to utilise satellite broadcasting via the Assadabad earth station in western Iran. Many international events could be broadcast to Iranian audiences, such as the Apollo moon landing, the World Cup from Mexico, the Shah's visit to President Nixon and the historic heavy-weight title fight between Mohammad Ali and Joe Frazier. Also, Iran was able to broadcast internationally the lavish spectacle of the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire in October 1971".

In the early 1970s, the demand for satellite, both for the expansion of telecommunication and television broadcasting, became crucial. These developments coincided with the domination of academic debates about 'development' and the role which communication plays in this domain. This phenomenon, on the one hand, encouraged the then Iranian authorities to accelerate their attempts, while on the other hand, persuaded the communication scholars to support projects such as the utilisation of satellite. In this way, during the mid 1970's, Stanford University helped Iran concerning the feasibility of the utilisation of satellite for the development of educational and health services, as well as the expansion of broadcasting and telecommunication. At the first stage, some barriers postponed the continuation of this project, amongst them was the competition between the Ministry of the PTT and the newly formed NIRT over the monopoly of the project. Also the government hesitated over the whole idea, since they thought the issue required further study in order to chose the right satellite technology from the right companies. Finally, Iran decided to give a contract to General Electric for a 'know how' analysis of a tailor-made satellite technology based on Iran's present and future telecommunication and broadcasting needs. These attempts faced deadlock at the outbreak of the revolution in 1979 and afterwards by the

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99 For a brief account of the development of this project and related issues see: Mohammadi, A (1997).
Iraq-imposed war. Apparently, during the first years after the revolution, the project did not gain enough attention. Subsequently, the problems caused by the war as well as the inability of the government to finance the project, reinforced the indifference towards the utilisation of satellite. However, very soon, the need to use satellite obliged the IRI to put the satellite issue on the agenda once again, and the second phase of satellite access began. In 1985, by leasing a transponder from INTELSAT, the VVIR succeeded in broadcasting internally and internationally via satellite. The merits of the first measure encouraged the authorities to lease the second transponder in 1987 and the third one in 1990. These transponders via TV Receiver Only (TVRO) covered the entire country. In this way, the VVIR now has three transponders from INTELSAT, which are used for broadcasting four television channels and up to twelve radio stations (PI). Although in 1986, the Iraqi intruder planes bombed the Assadabad satellite communication centre and damaged up to 90% of it, in a short while, the reconstruction of this centre along with the construction of two other centres in Mobarakah and Boomhen paved the way for resumption of their activities (San’at-e Rowz, April-May 1994 no. 3). In another move, the IRI became a member of International Mobile Satellite Organisation (INMARSAT) in 1984. Then, for remote sensing and weather forecasting it gained access to the LANDSAT and Nova, which are not sufficiently active now. The third stage marks the Iranian government’s intention to have its own tailor made satellite. To gain access to its tailor-made satellite, the IRI undertook two projects. The first project, named 'Satellite Plan' or 'Television for Village', was supervised by the VVIR, and the second one, titled 'The Independent Telecommunication Satellite of the IRI' or Zohreh (Venus), was supervised by the TCI. The plan was to utilise ZohrehSat, formed in 1986, and which was to consist of three satellites. The first one should have been launched in 1991, the second one in 1992 and the third one was to remained on the ground as a reserve (CSRPE, 1994 no: 41). After several time delays, the above mentioned plans are still not carried out.

What seems to be the barrier for these measures now, is a matter of controversy. Generally, the need for tailor-made satellites from the economic, technical
and political points of view are hardly justifiable. This is mainly because their capacity is beyond the existing, and even the future, needs of these organisations. Therefore it is hard for them to be accepted by the related decision-makers, such as Majles and PBO. Based on a PTT estimation, the country is actually in need of 30 transponders for different purposes. In this estimation, broadcasting had been included for the PTT. On the other hand, the VVIR claims to pursue its own DBS plan through an independent satellite. As their initial step, the VVIR have registered for one spot and the PTT for three spots by the ITU (PI). According to Naraghi, the executive director of the TCI, Iran had registered for four spots in the geostationary orbit at 26, 34, 41 and 47 degrees, but because of the delay in launch, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had occupied two of the allocated spots. Also, recently, Israel has tried for another one (Khavaran, 24 December 1994). Despite this, according to Mortazavi of the VVIR, Iran has settled three Scrapped satellite in these spots with the intention of substituting them with new ones in the near future (PI). It seems that, despite several time delays, the PTT is still interested in launching Zohreh. Two reasons persuaded the PTT to struggle and push the project ahead. The first is the flourishing of different forms of communications, especially the good market for mobile phones and data transmission. The second is the new chance for the PTT to somehow put its stamp on broadcasting whether by direct interference, such as developing cable network or DBS, or indirectly, through controlling the hardware. The latter noted attempt can be seen in the light of competition between the PTT and the VVIR at the present time, which is also a kind of competition between traditional and moderate factions.

The lack of any justifiable estimation lead the PBO to directly investigate the case. The result of this investigation demonstrated that both organisations were trying for an independent satellite. Also it confirmed that many organisations, with limited need, undertook some measures to gain access to (VSAT) from the pathways beyond the existing TCI network. In no way were they ready to use TCI facilities. The report findings showed those organisations indeed wanted to avoid any delay in their

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100 On this see: Informatics Newsletter (Khabarnamaye Anformatic) 1993/1372 (55):41-49.
projects, and any unnecessary involvement, which they believe is caused by the TCI monopoly. It is evident that there is a big demand for transmission in the country, whether for voice, data or visual transmitting, which it is estimated will increase in the near future. The very existence of these demands accelerated competition between the two organisations for access to tailor-made satellites. Surprisingly, the PBO concluded that the country does not need any tailor-made satellites. According to the report, the VVIR has access to three 72 MHz transponders which were rented from INTELSAT through a five year contract. Due to some technical limitations, until recently the VVIR could not use more than half of the transponders' frequency band width (it was used for the broadcasting of the programmes of channels 1, 2, 3, and 4). The second half of the transponders' capacity has remained unused. Later on, during the interviews, I found that this capacity, just recently, was allocated to other forms of transmission such as telecommunication, data transferring, and news and visual news transmission purposes. By using INTELSAT's transponders, the VVIR could only reach some recipients in the Middle East, Eastern European countries (in the case of those who had access to proper dishes to receive INTELSAT programmes), the VVIR provincial centres, as well as some countries in the region. Therefore the report suggested that the VVIR would be able to lease a channel from AsiaSAT (probably AsiaSAT 2) for relaying or broadcasting its programmes to Asia if they wished. As the report advises, in this case, many audiences of AsiaSAT channels throughout Asia (from Japan to the Middle East and North Russia and Australia) who have a proper dish to watch in Asia, can also watch the VVIR programmes. The report concludes that, as far as the VVIR's need of a new transponder is concerned, this organisation neither needs a new transponder nor a tailor-made satellite, except to broadcast in Asia. According to the PBO report, the TCI, by having one 72 MHz and one 150 MHz transponder also have access to three 72 MHz transponders which are twice the actual capacity needed by the country.

To state what has been done for the above mentioned tailor-made satellites, the project initially consulted with France and Italy for a launch by the European Space
Agency (ESA). It was then cancelled for some time, but recently, a new round of talks between Iran and France over protocol has begun again. There is no information about the recent protocol, but according to the President, H. Rafsanjani, the final date for launching the Iranian satellite will be in 1997-1998, in accordance with the Ministries of PTT, Industry and Defence (Ettela'at International, 28 February 1997).

8. Audience Segmentation, Thematic Channels

The feasibility of thematic channels or any other form of narrowcasting is inspired by the development and the abundance of the new communication carriers, the increasing of radio frequencies provided by digitalisation of the transmission systems, and the decline in the prices of the new communication technologies and services. Since the aim of every broadcaster is to gain access to the vast majority of its targeted audiences, broadcasters are currently taking advantage of these opportunities and, by delivering some special programmes, segmenting audiences. These programmes, which are mainly delivered by cable and satellite, at the outset of the 1990s, have resulted in all kinds of specialised or thematic channels. In return, it is expected that it will prevent falling audiences who would otherwise be exposed to many unwanted messages.

When access to the right audience is the main reason for establishing thematic channels, the VVIR has chosen this pattern as a reaction to its foreign rivals. The principal reasons for such an outward looking policy from the VVIR is to maintain the specific audiences targeted by dozens of thematic channels, namely; Cartoons, Sport, Music, Movies, which, as the IRI believes are mainly targeted at Iranian children and youth. The concern of the IRI is understandable because a large proportion of the population of Iran is young, (at least 40% of the population are under 20 years old).

The initial steps in the establishment of the thematic channels i.e. entertainment, science and education, and therefore the segmentation of the audiences, began in 1993. So, age became the first priority of the VVIR as a way of segmenting the audiences.
Later on, this measure was promoted by considering the regional issues. Here, the variables of locality and region became further bases of segmentation, which has resulted in either new provincial channels, or the expansion of the established ones.

Generally, in public broadcasting one message is transmitted to all the audiences, as in the market one product goes to the entire market\textsuperscript{101}. It is supposed that by audience segmentation, a particular message goes to the distinct audiences as, in an economic sense, a special product goes to the distinct market segment. What hesitation there is about audience segmentation in Iran, goes back to the means of adopting this measure, which is mainly a political decision against foreign thematised channels. Therefore, the programmes reflect the ideological and political concerns of the IRI rather than fulfilling the demands of the targeted segments. This approach could reduce the roles which are generally expected to be played by thematic channels in maintaining the segmented audiences. The lack of enough experience in this field and the absence of appropriate software facilities are other barriers to the success of thematic channels in the short term. Thus, the establishment of thematic channels in Iran is mainly the product of the internationalisation of broadcasting rather than a reflection of domestic needs. Here, the question is to what extent the political structure allows the network to satisfy the audiences' taste. This is particularly the case when the VVIR has chosen to start with youngsters as its initial target audience, a stratum with more demands and different tastes in comparison with other segments.

To deal with the specification of each Network, one can say that Network 1 has remained as a public channel. The main concern of this network is planned to reflect the official policies of the system through general programmes. Because of this trend, the process of divesting this network of some specific programmes began in 1995. According to the new changes, Network 2, has been ordered to thematise its programmes, and broadcast educational and cultural programmes. To reach this aim

\textsuperscript{101} On market segmentation see:
- Cunningham & Cunningham (1981).
Network 2 has begun a close relationship with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Souroush, November-December 1993 no: 674). It has been delegated to broadcast specific programmes for the target groups of these ministries. In this way, since 1993, gradually children’s and sports programmes have been in the process of being phased out of Network 2. Instead, these programmes have been exchanged for other programmes about children and sport, from a scientific and a specialised point of view.

Channel 3, is actually one of the channels of Network 1 which has been allotted to entertainment and to targeting the youngsters. According to the VVIR director, "the aim for the operation of network 3 is to fill people's and especially youngsters' leisure time" (Souroush, February-March 1993 no: 685). Until now most of its programmes are sport. However, the VVIR plans to provide theatre, a free forum for youngster, more movies and series (Souroush, September-October 1994 no: 711). The importance of this channel is related to the fact that until now there was little attention paid towards youngsters in the two former networks. The programmes on Network 4 consist of scientific round tables, and speculative and experimental debates. The network is a sort of thematic channel, but still there is no official statement about its specific audiences. However, it seems that channel is also indirectly oriented towards youngsters. This network, which has been operating since March 1996, also broadcast some selected foreign satellite programmes which were consistently promised by the authorities during the last few years (Ettela'at, March 1996). Finally, the "provincial networks" are allocated local programmes; mainly news (social and cultural) and entertainment.

The process of narrowcasting is just beginning, and therefore it is difficult to come to any conclusion about the new policy, but there is some speculation about these new developments between people. In December 1993 Souroush magazine at the outset of the operation of channel 3, interviewed people to find out people's expectation

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102 According to Dr. Pournejati "there will be an special channel for children on one of the transmitters of Network 1 or 2 in the near future" (Souroush, September-October 1994 no: 711). However the promise still remains unkept.
of Network 3. Regarding the interviewees, although most of them welcomed the new channel, they did not conceal their doubt about the non-intervention of the political authorities, the pressure groups, and the technical and financial difficulties of the VVIR to deliver its promise (Souroush, 11 December 1993 no: 711). However, the new developments will intensify the competition between the channels and prepare the domestic networks to compete with foreign rivals.

Summary

The monopolistic directing of the radio and television in Iran and the absence of any internal and external rivals until 1990s, together, has resulted in a safe environment for this apparatus. Nevertheless, the absence of competition does not imply that the VVIR did not face any media dilemmas during its short history, since the revolution (1979). Prime among these difficulties was the period of the expulsion of some experts who were suspected of being loyal to the former regime, or having secular tendencies, and those who were perceived as not being acceptable to the IRI broadcasting agenda. This continued by the hiring and firing of the heads of the broadcasting organisations, and the challenge of different political factions to gain hegemony over the broadcasting system. But none of these difficulties could bring about much change for the organisation. Expelling some of the high ranking managers and the suspected experts ended very quickly and is even now forgotten. The appointment and expulsion of the heads of the organisation came to an end almost two years after the revolution by the appointment of Mohammad Hashemi to this post. Challenges between the two main factions, despite their importance, could not make many problems since both of them were loyal to the main principles and criteria of the Islamic system. In this way, perhaps the greatest difficulty for the organisation during the 80s was the introduction of VCRs and their diffusion. However, even this occurrence could not generate as many changes as expected. The VCRs were not supported by a sufficient number and variety of video cassettes. Therefore, radio and television as the only sources of news,
information and entertainment, remained intact and kept their dominance over the country's political, cultural and social life.

Turning to the 1990s, a storm began and no shelter was provided. With DBS the entire political and broadcasting systems of the country found themselves faced with the invasion of dozens of foreign broadcasters, who were delivering some undesirable programmes. This in return created some extreme crises. The different remarks and stances of the authorities of state, the contradicting approaches taken by different organisations, along with the speed of the diffusion of satellite dishes, at the first stage clearly demonstrated the depth of the crises. The outcome was the formation of two main stances around the issue, one in favour of an open DBS policy, and another strongly supporting a closed approach. At this stage, the conservatives strongly advised the adoption of a political and legal approach to conquer the crises. However, the problem was that was no appropriate legal regulation applicable to the new situation. To fill this legal vacuum, conservatives tried to derive the preventive policies from some general laws about directing cultural and audio-visual affairs, particularly from the general and unwritten policies related to the theme of "cultural invasion". But these policies and regulations hardly suited the ongoing events. To avoid anarchy and to stop the crises, the state finally came to the decision to patiently codify apt and practical regulations. The result came out almost a year after, and prevented people having access to satellite reception equipment. Altogether, as the law was codified with the maximum accuracy, and based on the conventional media policy's perspective it ignored the necessities of the new media environment, so its credibility remained doubtful.

In the next sequence, the increase foreign satellite channels, the difficulties of controlling the foreign satellites broadcasters and the audiences' access, created an uncertain atmosphere. This uncertainty was particularly intensified by technological

103 For example: Ghanon-e Nahveh-y Mojazat-e Ashkhasi Ke Dar Omor-e Samei Va Basari Fa'aleyat Ghyre Mojaz Darand (the Law of Special Manner for Punishment of the Persons who are Illegally Active in the Audio Visual Sector) Official Journal, 3 March 1994 no. 14274.
changes and became one of the decisive factors in the limited relaxation of the IRI's DBS policy. At this stage, along with enforcing the law, the IRI undertook some new measures to promote national radio and television. Increasing the number of television channels was the most important one. The IRI also became involved with other issues including privatisation, deregulation, structural and financial changes. At the same time it was faced with the demands of the new interest groups, and the questions which had been raised about the bad situation of the media industry under the new law. Until now the IRI has put its emphasis on the hardware sector and channel diversification, while what is profoundly at issue, is content diversification.
Chapter VII

Conclusion

In the previous chapter the role of the world economy in the acceleration of the globalisation of communication was pointed out. It was briefly stated that the needs of the world economy for an advance communication system for business transactions and transmission of information has channelled capital towards this sector. This in turn led to significant progress in the communication industry and cleared the way for the globalisation of communication. It was also explained that apart from the instrumental role of communication systems in socio-economic activities, the technologies and products of communication and the media industry have become the subject of business and globalised. Globalisation of communication and the international flow of media products caused a set of reactions among different nations and political systems and called for new cultural and media policies.

With this background I started with the early days of point-to-point satellite broadcasting and the feasibility of DBS. As pointed out, satellite broadcasting in its different forms has always been a matter of different reactions and heated debates in national and international circles. The first period of debate about satellite broadcasting at the international level occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, when satellite broadcasting still required the intermediary of ground stations to reach the audiences. This was mainly because of the spillover of television signals to other territories. While it is difficult to draw a concrete boundary between the early stances of different countries in reaction to the satellite broadcasting, it can be suggested that from the beginning most of the North industrial countries, particularly the United States of America, supported the idea of expansion of satellite for broadcasting and data transmission purposes. In contrast, many developing countries, if not totally opposed to such an expansion, were deeply concerned about its consequences. This was due to several factors including the lack of access to this carrier, the firm belief of it being a one way flow of information, the domination of Western products, in particular
American domination, decreasing the role of national broadcasting and finally a deep concern about losing political sovereignty and the erosion of national identity.

Nonetheless after the instalment of hundreds of transponders in geostationary orbit and the operation of DBS, this sentiment did not continue with the same intensity. Indeed losing faith in international assemblies to develop an international legal framework to regulate satellite broadcasting activities was among the most important reasons for this discontinuity. Interestingly, among the hundreds of pieces of writing published in the Iranian press about the negative implications of DBS, the question of referring to the international assemblies to prevent these signals was rarely raised. Paradoxically, decision-making for DBS, an international issue, was transferred to the national governments. This in turn involved, and confronted, different ideological and socio-political trends within national boundaries. Since then the ideological, socio-political and socio-cultural structures of the societies became the main factors in decision-making about DBS. However, as noted earlier the very concept of national media policy appeared to have limited efficiency.

Faced with DBS the IRI gradually came up with a strategy which I have analysed along five axes, (1) studying the feasibility of technological countermeasures or satellite jamming; (2) adopting a propagandistic approach against DBS contents (3) enacting a prohibition law; (4) the expansion of local, national and international networks, and (5) the monitoring and re-broadcasting of some selected programmes from DBS channels.

Concerning the first approach, although at the beginning the notion of technological countermeasures captured the attention of those who were concerned about the consequences of foreign satellite programmes, this project was tried and suspended very soon. The reasons for such a setback were probably the international laws and regulations, the lack of progress in the prevention of satellite signals in that time, and the concern about the counteraction of other broadcasters.

The main theme of the second approach, that is propagandising against DBS contents and their implications, was the Tahajom-e Farhangy (cultural invasion)
discourse which was extensively used as a discourse counter to globalisation and in particular globalisation of communication. This policy with its West versus Islam notion, was extensively applied to convince people that DBS programmes are a threat against their religious and national identity. This approach which is very similar to the conspiracy theory in its process turned into mere slogans and state propaganda, thus it failed to give an acceptable amount of information about the different consequences of this phenomenon including its negative aspects. While this approach by itself was not productive, it cleared the way for part of the press to propagate the points of view of those who wanted access to the DBS programmes and to spread the issue throughout the country.

The extent to which the press became involved in the issue is also worthy of attention. Where most of the press were following the governing body guide-line, a few others indirectly were defending the rights of the citizens to decide on their own. In fact, for the main body of the press, DBS was the symbol of "cultural invasion". However, for the rest, it was a tool and an opportunity to defend individual rights and the principles of civil rights as well as challenging the dominant view in regard to different aspects of globalisation of communication. In this sense DBS played an instrumental role for all the involved parties. They used DBS as an excuse to express their points of view in regard to other media issues and to bring broader socio-political issues into the picture.

The third and the most salient element of the IRI's DBS policy was the enactment of a prohibition law. The efficiency of such a law from the beginning, however, was doubtful for many people, state authorities as well as the experts. Indeed the authorities of the state from the beginning were aware of the fact that the law ultimately could only decrease the speed of installation of satellite dishes without being able to control them. This lack of confidence, in fact, was rooted in technological changes and the difficulty of carrying out the law which in turn created a situation of uncertainty. Repeated delays in enacting a law for such an "urgent issue", clearly indicates that the authorities of state had doubts about the efficiency of any deterrent
regulation and attempted to identify a better solution. Added to this the majority of the Cabinet Ministers and a group of Majles representatives were also against the prohibition plan which could make passing and carrying out the law difficult. However, despite the state authorities understanding of the limited effect of the prohibition law, they carried out such a measure in the hope of minimal results. These results, according to my findings, are given below. Firstly, there was no other alternative solution through which the governing body could manage the situation and satisfy themselves at the same time, according to Islamic criteria. Secondly, the governing body wanted to be rid of this situation of uncertainty. Thirdly, as stated earlier, they were expecting the law to decrease the speed of penetration. And finally, as many authorities put it, by banning the use of satellite programmes they could buy time and review other solutions, particularly the long term ones. As the prohibition law did succeed in decreasing the speed of penetration, in some ways it can be considered successful.\footnote{According to the Iran News 12 January 1995, a government survey indicates that a significant number of satellite dish owners in downtown Tehran, have voluntarily removed dishes lately. The report also indicated that the demand in the market for satellite dishes and equipment has drastically declined.} It also, at least from the legal point of view, removed some uncertainty. However, it is difficult to prove that the authorities seized the opportunity and came up with a long term solution for the problem. In contrast, the continuation of the use of satellite dishes in secret indicates the difficulties of implementing such a law and the extent to which national media policy has lost its ground.

The expansion of television networks including the local, national and international networks and their length of programmes was the fourth and the most defensible dimension of the IRI DBS policy. This approach actually produced three other developments: an increase in programme production, the permission of private sector participation in programme making and channel diversification. Basically the expansion of television networks was to maintain domestic audiences and to reach Iranian and other Persian language speakers around the globe. In doing so, at the first stage, the VVIR increased its production capability to feed the old and the newly established networks. Regarding securing programmes for these networks, one option
could be importation, but the VVIR faced difficulty in importing foreign programmes due to the perceived contradiction of the country's dominant value system. Plus importing foreign programmes to substitute for the same programmes broadcast by foreign channels did not make any sense. Therefore the VVIR was compelled to concentrate on domestic products. The production capacity of the VVIR was limited, the VVIR stretched out its hand to the private sector to participate in programme-making for national broadcasting. Although there were some reservations regarding the latter measure by those in the private sector, they welcomed the project. The outcome affected the production positively. This development is worthy of attention particularly when considering media production as envisaged by the world system theory. This theory assumes that the division of labour dictates that the centre nations emerge as the main producers and consumers of media products in the international market, while the periphery nations are primarily consumers, and therefore dependent on imports from the core nations to meet their media needs. While this sounds realistic, and it is logical to add that DBS is widening this gap, the pressure on peripheral and semi-peripheral countries towards a intense competition might bring about a different result. The competitive presence of DBS in Iran has compelled the national broadcasting system to compete with dozens of foreign rivals by significantly increasing programme production. Although the extent of such a development has reached its limits, the quality of programmes still needs to be improved and the broadcasting apparatuses, both in the areas of soft and hardware, are dependent on foreign suppliers, these factors can not diminish the importance of such developments. Nonetheless, two factors should be taken into particular account. Firstly, the restriction of importing programmes from the international market by the VVIR, and secondly, the huge amount of investment of the IRI for this goal. This development could go even further and be more successful if the authorities deregulated the broadcasting system. Until now DBS has had two positive results for national broadcasting, namely an increase in programme making and the participation of the private sector in production.
The endeavour to thematise the networks and diversify the channels was the fourth dimension of the IRI’s DBS policy. Within this approach the existing local channels (provincial networks) were reinforced and the new ones such as Shabakeh Ostan-e Tehran (Tehran Province Network) were established. The provincial networks are mainly oriented towards local issues and developments and entertainment programmes. This development, along with allocating two national channels for sport and entertainment as well as scientific programmes, led the VVIR beyond some quantitative measures, such as adding to the number of channels and increasing the length of programmes, to qualitative ones. Here the presupposition was that if diversity could attract audiences, then this could be achieved by the domestic channels as well. This approach contained some realistic and non-realistic aspects. It was realistic in the sense that it is rational to suppose that increasing national channels can maintain audiences. However, it was unrealistic in that adopting this approach could not be productive without taking into account the audiences' tastes which until now the VVIR had avoided.

Another pillar of the IRI’s DBS policy was the provision of international broadcasting. This idea was one of the ambitions of the former regime, but this project faced deadlock due to the Revolution. Under the Islamic Republic, the war imposed by Iraq meant it did not receive enough attention. With the operation of DBS, the project received more attention and was actually put on the agenda of the VVIR. Finally Jam-e Jam [International] Television Network began beaming from mid December 1997 for Iranian and all Persian speaking people abroad. In the first stage the programmes were broadcast for Europe, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf states. However, Jam-e Jam overseas programmes will be broadcast, in the near future, throughout the world via Utel Sat for which a contract has been agreed, in 1997, with the British Telecommunication Company (B. T).

The broadcasting of some selected DBS programmes, which was one of the promises of the VVIR authorities during the early reaction to DBS, was also analysed as another pillar of the IRI’s DBS policy to satisfy those who wanted to have access to
the DBS programmes. Yet it is not clear what makes this approach different from the routine approach of this organisation except the amount of foreign programmes being broadcast. Here we must say that before the introduction of DBS, the VVIR routinely monitored and broadcast some selected foreign programmes and that this still continues. However, this approach is important since it indicates that the authorities to some extent have had a change of mind to a certain extent in regard to DBS programmes.

The above formed the major dimension of the IRI’s DBS policy. These approaches show that the IRI is determined to maintain its monopoly over the broadcasting system, despite the fact that the VVIR has now found dozens of rivals and that people have access to their programmes. Putting aside the number of people who have access to these channels and to what extent the prohibition law has succeeded in preventing their access, what is important is the very availability of these channels. The IRI has put forward a development project to reinforce national broadcasting, to maintain the domestic audiences and at the same time, to avoid carrying out the radical changes demanded by the new media environment. This aspect of the IRI’s DBS policy is also concomitant with a limited change of attitude in regard to national broadcasting, to DBS, to the role of the private sector, to entertainment programmes, advertising, financing, audiences' needs and so on. To exhibit the extent of this attitude change towards DBS, one can compare the beginning and the end of a process which resulted in the IRI’s DBS policy. In the beginning satellite jamming, the absolute denial of the good quality of any satellite programme and the collection of satellite dishes characterised the IRI’s reaction to the DBS. However, in less than two years this perspective changed to a more realistic approach, in the sense that it moved towards legalism, the promotion of the broadcasting system and a re-evaluation of foreign satellite programmes.

From now on what is worthy of attention is the relation between these two approaches, namely following the deterrent approach, which denies access, and carrying out a kind of reform. The motive for the whole policy was rooted in the fear of uncontrolled information coming from outside, which the elite thought may disrupt
social, political and religious harmony. The apparent differences in the various approaches share this same fundamental motivation and, as such, they tend to reinforce each other.

In the theoretical discussion we pointed to the IRI as one example of those countries which have an ambivalent reaction to globalisation. This is to say that they neither totally stand against this wave nor totally welcome it. In fact the IRI's concern is to participate in global integration with its own "particularity". This approach in the end is not very different from taking an opposed stance, because globalisation is about to modify these "particularities". Since this approach keeps the IRI aloof from the advantages of participation in the global process they usually end in a two-track policy which demonstrates the extent to which the IRI policies are influenced by global realities. Turning to the DBS policy, the IRI relied on a deterrent policy to maintain its "particularity", but they organised a reformist project to keep pace with global developments. The core of this "particularity" is Islam which in turn plays a significant role in forming the socio-political structure of the society. This underpinned the concern of the IRI about broadcasting, particularly under the globalisation of communication, where maintaining the "particularities" is challenged. Due to this sentiment, from the early days of the revolution the broadcasting organisation was considered the key institution in the country. This attention increased over time by the expansion of the globalisation of communication. Transferring the supervision of radio and television to the Supreme Leader by the revision of the constitution indicates the extent to which this concern has mounted.

To what extent these measures could be successful bring us back to the question of the quality of programmes and the extent to which they can satisfy the Iranian audiences. What is certain is that, unlike the ability of the IRI to expand the national broadcasting system in a short period of time, in the area of deregulation of content they have faced difficulty. Here the "particularity" which the IRI tries to maintain, works as a barrier for any openness in its broadcasting normative pattern. In other words, exceeding the limit of change in the broadcasting pattern directly questions the above noted
"particularity". At this juncture it is worthwhile emphasising that when we talk about the IRI broadcasting or DBS policy, these policies mainly reflect the perspective of the conservative faction. This faction, by controlling the broadcasting system, tries to prevent it from fundamental changes. However, the presence of two factions in the Iranian political sphere reinforces the feasibility of changing broadcasting and DBS policy at the time of a change in the balance of power. In this regard, after the election of Mohammad Khatami as the President in 1997, the conflict between the two factions over the cultural and broadcasting policies has widened. The new administration believes in the relaxation of cultural policy and criticises the conservatives for their monopolistic approach towards broadcasting. Therefore changing the balance of power would result in a relaxation of the existing DBS policy just as the appointment of the new government means the press enjoy more freedom in comparison with the past.

Regarding McQuail's typology of media policy options and the correspondent theories, it seems that the IRI broadcasting policy is now to a limited extent undergoing some changes as a result of globalisation of communication and the internal developments. Here we can point to the fact that nowadays a new trend towards the objective or indeed the industrial policy is forming. For example, as showed in the text, during the Majles debates there were quite significant debates about the negative implication of the prohibition law for the whole communication industry. This means that the authorities in different circles are now more aware of the economic dimension of communication and mass media. The expansion policy and the huge amount of investment in broadcasting also indicates the policy-makers' attention towards this aspect of broadcasting policy. However, under no circumstances has paying attention to the industrial dimension of media decreased the importance of cultural policy. As regard to dominance versus pluralistic approach, as typified by McQuail (1985), one can argued that although there is a limited sign of change in regard to dominance policy, it is still difficult to show the policy moving towards pluralism. This is despite the fact that a changing of policy in this domain is strongly demanded by the people since they
want the broadcasting system to address the socio-political diversity of the Iranian society.

As regards the direction for further studies in this field in Iran, I would like to emphasise that while salient studies on Iranian mass media have been conducted by the scholars of this field, whether outside or inside the country, in the areas of media policy and in particular broadcasting policy, extensive policy research must be done to understand the Iranian broadcasting policy. However, researchers should note that at the present time the lack of routine and basic information actually halts the research procedure. To fill this gap it seems, in this stage, studies in this field should be oriented towards the provision of the initial information to support comprehensive studies in the future. These studies can be conducted through monographs, reports and case studies, even though they are presented in a descriptive form. From my own research, further questions to pursue include:

- The structure of the broadcasting system in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran, for the understanding of the differences, the extent of change and the conformity of the structure with the new media environment.

- The structure of broadcasting policy-making in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. These kinds of studies make it easier to analyse the policies which have been adopted by the policy-making bodies.

- The autobiography of the policy-makers. This would give us the knowledge, background and experiences of those who are involved in broadcasting policy-making which is very important for the analysis of a policy.

- The study of the financial structure of broadcasting and advertising in terms of radio and television in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. These kinds of studies pave the way for a better understanding of the future direction of policies.

- The study of broadcasting ownership and control which gives a base to the further understanding and the anticipation of change in broadcasting policies.

I re-emphasise that the lack of such information, not only does not allow policy research to reach a concrete and reliable result, but it also torments the researcher.
Therefore, those who are in some way involved in media policy research should pay attention to this vacuum and try to fill it, even though it is parallel with their more extensive and comprehensive studies. Nonetheless, what this does reveal is the dimensions of national policy-making in the globalised environment and adds another case study to the growing literature in the field.
Appendixes
Appendix 1

The Plan for The Prohibition of The Utilisation of Satellite Reception Equipment

Article. 1.
Dating from the approval of this law, the import, manufacture, distribution, transportation, repair, installation, maintenance and utilisation of satellite reception equipment are prohibited.

Article. 2.
The interior Ministry has been charged with the duty by using disciplinary forces and if necessary, mobilising men at the earliest possible date to begin collecting in satellite reception equipment.

Note.
If the owners of satellite reception equipment surrender the equipment themselves within one week, dating from the approval of this law, they will be exempt from the punishments inserted in this law.

Article. 3.
The Interior Ministry has the duty by harmonising with the Ministry of Intelligence through any possible means, to take measures to prevent the import, manufacture, distribution, transportation, repair, installation of satellite reception equipment and meanwhile by detention of the above mentioned equipment report the agents together with the confiscated goods to the Islamic Revolutionary Courts. The manner of harmonising between ministries will be determined according to the executive regulation(s) of the law.

Note.
All confiscated equipment subject to this law will belong to the country Voice and Vision (Radio and Television) may utilise it for developing its coverage.

Article. 4.
All the cultural apparatuses of the country have a duty to explain to society the destructive effects of utilising deviant satellite programmes.

Article. 5.
The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, The Islamic Propagation Organisation (I. P. O.) and the Voice and Vision Organisation can record those programmes which do not contradict the values and other bases of Islamic and national culture.

Article. 6.

105 The suggested plan of the Commissions of Culture and Islamic Art, Internal Affairs and Councils to the Majles on 11 May 1994.
Voice and Vision, Post and Telegraph and Telephone and related organisations are exempt from this law.

**Article 7.**

Apparatuses and organisations that need to use satellite reception equipment for their legal duty should take out the necessary license from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic guidance in accordance with the Ministry of Intelligence.

**Article 8.**

Importers, producers, distributors, transports, installers, repairers, and those who try to keep satellite reception equipment in addition to confiscation of the recovered properties, will be subject to the punishment stated below by the Islamic Revolutionary Courts.

a). For the first offence a cash penalty from two to five times, of the value of the recovered commodity.

b). For further offences the above mentioned persons will be sentenced to cash penalties from five to ten times of the value of the commodity in addition to six months to three years imprisonment.

**Article 9.**

One week after the approval of this law the users of satellite reception, in addition to confiscation of their commodities, will be sentenced to the punishments below.

a) After the expiry of the above mentioned period of grace, the first offence will be punished by two to five times the current price of the recovered commodities.

b) For further offences the utiliser will be punished by five to ten times the price of the revealed commodities.

**Article 10.**

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in accordance with the Foreign Ministry, Juridical force and other ministries and organisations, are charged with the duty using international juridical levers to take necessary measures toward the preservation of the country's cultural boundaries and the family dynasty against destructive and prosaic satellite programmes.

**Note.**

The advertising of satellite licenses in the press, Voice and Vision and Urban propaganda (including wall posters/clip sheet) is strictly prohibited.

**Article 11.**

The Ministries of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Intelligence, of the Interior, PTT, and the Voice and Vision Organisation are charged with the duty to provide and submit the
executive regulations within one month from the approval of this law. The Cabinet Council is charged with the duty within two months of the approval of this law to endorse the executives regulation.

Article. 12.

This law will be enforceable for three years and if necessary will be extended\textsuperscript{106}.

\textsuperscript{106} Jomhuri-ye Islami, no. 4520, 2 January 1995
Appendix 2

The Law for The Prohibition of The Utilisation of Satellite Reception Equipment

Article 1.
According to this law the importation, distribution and utilisation of satellite reception equipment except in those instances that are determined by the law is prohibited.

Article 2.
The Interior Ministry is charged to begin collecting satellite reception equipment by using disciplinary forces or mobilising men at the earliest possible time.

Note.
The deadline for collecting the existing satellite reception equipment is one month from the approval of the law. After the expiry of the mentioned deadline the utilisers will be subject to punishments specified in this law.

Article 3.
The Interior Ministry is charged with the duty in harmony with the Ministry of Intelligence by any possible means to take measures to prevent the importation and distribution of equipment which is merely utilised for the reception of satellite broadcast, and by restraining the above mentioned equipment report their agents to the competent juridical authorities. The manner of harmony will be determined by executive regulation.

Note.
All confiscated commodities subject to this law will belong to Voice and Vision to use for the sake of developing radio and television coverage.

Article 4.
All the country’s cultural apparatuses are charged with the duty to explain the destructive effects of watching prosaic programmes in society.

Article 5.
The Organisation of Voice and Vision and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Visual Media Institution) can record and broadcast those satellite programmes which do not contradict the values and the bases of Islamic and national culture.

Article 6.
The apparatuses of Voice and Vision, Post and Telegraph and Telephone and their dependent organisations are exempt from this law.

Ratified on 12 February 1995 (Official Journal, no. 14468, 6 March 1995)
Note.
Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran is exempt from taking import licenses and non-manufacture certificates\textsuperscript{108} from ministries and governmental organisations such as the Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Commerce, and Atomic Energy Agent certification, and ordering the registration of commerce ministry to import transmitters, production and broadcasting equipment, raw materials for the production of movies and TV series.

Article 7.
Apparatuses and organisations that need to use satellite reception equipment for their legal duties must take out the necessary licence for the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in harmony with the Ministries of Intelligence and Post, Telegraph and Telephone.

Article 8.
The importers, producers and distributors of satellite reception in addition to the seizure and confiscation of the recovered equipment by the courts, may be sentenced to a cash penalty not exceeding one hundred million Rials\textsuperscript{109}

Article 9.
The users of satellite reception equipment in addition to the seizure and confiscation of the recovered equipment will be sentenced to cash penalties from one to three million Rials.\textsuperscript{110}

a) The transportation, maintenance, installation and repair of satellite reception is prohibited and the perpetrators subject to cash penalties from one to five million Rials.\textsuperscript{111}

b) The funds received from the punishments in Articles 8 and 9 of this law will be settled in the Treasury and the total amount (100\%) goes under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and Voice and Vision of Islamic Republic of Iran to use, based on the approved credits of the country’s annual budget.

Article 10.
The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone and related organisations, is charged with the duty, by using international and juridical levers, of taking necessary measures towards the preservation of the country’s cultural boundaries and the family dynasty against frivolous and prosaic satellite programmes.

\textsuperscript{108} To import different parts or equipment the applicant should take necessary certifications from the related ministry which shows they are not manufactured in Iran

\textsuperscript{109} \$ 3333-33333

\textsuperscript{110} \$ 333-1000

\textsuperscript{111} \$ 333-1666
Note.
Publishing advertising through different means whether in the press, Voice and Vision or urban propaganda (Clip sheet, Wall poster) in which advertisements for satellite license is strictly forbidden.

Article 11.
The government is charged with the duty within one month from the date of approval of this law of providing and approving its executive regulation.
Table 1. The number of interviewees in terms of organisation and the taped interviews (Feb. 1996-June 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Number of interviewees</th>
<th>Number of taped interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCIG</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBO</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVIR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Radio Transmitters in the Provinces, By Date of Establishment (Pahlavi era)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tabriz</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashhad; Isfahan</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahvaz; Sanandaj**</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasht*</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rezaiyeh*; Shiraz; Kerman; Kermanshah</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahedan*; Gorgan**</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandar-Abbas*</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sari*</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahabad*</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalus*; Qasre Shirin**; Ahavaz(second transmitter); Ziba Kenar; Abadan*; Yazd; Hamadan; Bushehr*; khoramabad; Ilam*</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bam*; Bonab; Bandar-e Lengeh**; Marivan**; Ardabil*</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khash**; Taibad*; Iranshahr**</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: - Commercial Affairs (Tehran: NIRT publication department, May 1974:7)
- Kimiachi (1978:76-77)

* Frontier cities
• Ethnic minority centres
Table 3 Distribution of critics of the VIR (television) based upon beliefs about boring programmes and the absence of pleasant programmes in the Iranian press 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Accumulation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lack of pleasant programmes.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boredom of movies and serials.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramazan month (fasting month) close down of the pleasant programmes.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for useful and attractive programmes.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4. Satellite equipment price list in May-June 1994 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAKE</th>
<th>SPECIFICATION</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
<th>Rls</th>
<th>US $  **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DISH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian make</td>
<td>120ø (cm)</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>180ø</td>
<td>240,000-300,000</td>
<td>60-75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>210ø</td>
<td>370,000-1,000,000</td>
<td>92.5-250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>240ø</td>
<td>380,000-500,000</td>
<td>95-125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese make</td>
<td>180ø</td>
<td>440,000-750,000</td>
<td>110-187.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>210ø</td>
<td>700,000-900,000</td>
<td>175-225</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>offset 120x150</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gardiz 25º K</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>43.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California 25º K</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaparral 25º K</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardiz 0/7º K</td>
<td>KU</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampson 0/º7 K</td>
<td>KU</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECEIVER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vis SAT 912 L</th>
<th>Long Tuner</th>
<th>610,000</th>
<th>152.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; Short &quot;</td>
<td>550,000</td>
<td>137.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; Long &quot;</td>
<td>510,000</td>
<td>127.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; Short &quot;</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>2 entrance LNB</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>162.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; 840,000</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; 900,000</td>
<td>252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A set with 150 channels</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; 50 &quot;</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost for each flat in a community access consisting of central dish and tuner.</td>
<td>140,000-160,000,000</td>
<td>33-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost for each flat in a community reception with only a central dish.</td>
<td>80,000-100,000,000</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoder for all Orbit channels.</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Due to the transaction of satellite equipment in the black market, the prices were not stable. Here, in comparison with different estimations published in the Iranian press, the above price list published in Bahar Weekly, no. 1, 21 Feb. 1996 seems more reliable than others.

** Per US $ (in black market)= Rls 4000
### Table 5. Distribution of critics of the VIR. (television) programmes 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Accumulation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting programmes despite their serious difficulties.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The programmes more suitable for radio than television.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Television mostly pays attention to commonplace problems.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Television programmes are not realistic.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of attention to youth difficulties.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inattention towards family difficulties.</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The necessity of paying attention to the programme-making.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Satellite dish</th>
<th>Population / Building</th>
<th>Dish/Population</th>
<th>%Dish/Buildings</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>251893</td>
<td>2093</td>
<td>3052</td>
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<td>37849</td>
<td>%15</td>
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<td>26017</td>
<td>3942</td>
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<td>54400</td>
<td>%16</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>225454</td>
<td>25272</td>
<td>5154</td>
<td>8.8</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>25492</td>
<td>2549</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>55568</td>
<td>%10</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>29605</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>11988</td>
<td>%3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>24877</td>
<td>3580</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>36516</td>
<td>%15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>282803</td>
<td>44318</td>
<td>2659</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>17018</td>
<td>%6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>345134</td>
<td>48505</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6887</td>
<td>%2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>246807</td>
<td>49240</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>298171</td>
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<td>558</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2957</td>
<td>%1</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>239548</td>
<td>43362</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1188</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>248712</td>
<td>48733</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>188354</td>
<td>29659</td>
<td>1482</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>9485</td>
<td>%5</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>407568</td>
<td>62326</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8112</td>
<td>%2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>574630</td>
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<td>529</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3703</td>
<td>%1</td>
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<td>324353</td>
<td>42955</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
<td>9443</td>
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<td>58109</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>345601</td>
<td>40023</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>355801</td>
<td>40023</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1280</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>342799</td>
<td>53850</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>%/.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>=</td>
<td>6475673</td>
<td>954155</td>
<td>29460</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>199940</td>
<td>%3</td>
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Table 7. (6) Current and Development Expenditures for Communication, Information related sectors, Education, Culture and Sport in the First and Second Five Years Plans (Billion Rials)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>First Five years</th>
<th>Second Five Years</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curr</td>
<td>Deve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Mass communication</td>
<td>192.9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Secondary &amp; Non Formal Education</td>
<td>5036.6</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Art</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education &amp; Youth Affair</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post &amp; Telecommunication</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6425.9</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 8. Ratio of Production to Broadcasting In VVIR 1992-1995 (hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.1</td>
<td>3072</td>
<td>1546</td>
<td>3278</td>
<td>1607</td>
<td>4852</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.2</td>
<td>3138</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>3078</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>4395</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>2227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.N**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.N***</td>
<td>7879</td>
<td>3503</td>
<td>8171</td>
<td>3951</td>
<td>8805</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex.T ****</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehran</td>
<td>14089</td>
<td>6234</td>
<td>15065</td>
<td>7378</td>
<td>21473</td>
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<tr>
<td>P/B</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only for the first ten months of 1374 (March-December 1995)/** Provincial Networks (only for Tehran province)/*** Cities networks (other provinces)/**** Extra Territorial
Table 9. Domestic and Foreign Broadcasting of VVIR During Azar-Day 1374 (December -January 1995-1996) (hour)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Networks/production</th>
<th>N.1</th>
<th>N.2</th>
<th>N.3</th>
<th>P.N *</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>867.58</td>
<td>826.16</td>
<td>489.49</td>
<td>312.21</td>
<td>2496.34</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>142.33</td>
<td>245.30</td>
<td>200.24</td>
<td>9.57</td>
<td>898.24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1010.31</td>
<td>1071.46</td>
<td>690.13</td>
<td>322.28</td>
<td>3094.58</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Province Networks


Table 10. VVIR Broadcasting based on New and Repeated programmes for Azar and Day 1374 (December-January 1995-1996) (hour)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Networks Broadcasting</th>
<th>N. 1</th>
<th>N. 2</th>
<th>N. 3</th>
<th>P. N</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>6960.40</td>
<td>472.48</td>
<td>560.36</td>
<td>311.35</td>
<td>2041.39</td>
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<td>Repeated</td>
<td>313.51</td>
<td>598.58</td>
<td>129.37</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>1053.19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1010.31</td>
<td>1071.46</td>
<td>690.13</td>
<td>322.28</td>
<td>3094.58</td>
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</table>

Table 11. Extraterritorial television programmes since 1991 according to language and program (hour)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>ARABIC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holy Defence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>General Information</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
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<td>Historic</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>407</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>59</td>
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