Review

The conservative discourse and hegemonic failure of the reform discourse in Iran

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When Mohammad khatami's discourse of reform in Iran gave the political field to its anti discourse of conservative with the leadership of Mohammad Ahmadi Nejad after 8 years, several factors were recognized as the cause of failure of this discourse among which software and hardware power of conservatives were the most influential factors. In addition to criticizing the aforementioned minimalizing approach, the present study believes that no put-aside discourse can dislocate the dominant discourse unless the bearers and agents of the dominant discourse do not observe the rules of the game and make mistakes. Therefore, the essential hypothesis of this study is that increasing the power of conservatives by means of the mistakes of reformists led to dislocation of the reform discourse.

Key words: Discourse, the reform discourse, the conservative discourse, hegemony.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse of Islamic revolution, which was led by Imam Khomeini, resulted in crystallization of the political system, which is called "Islamic Republic". In fact, it was the combination (articulation) of two important signs of "republicanism" and "Islamism". Islam, which is indicative of a nodal point of group of the Islamic fundamentalists and traditionalist, brought signs of the clerical, jurisprudence, and the supreme Leader together in a public discourse. On the other hand, signs of people, law, and liberty in a modern secular liberal discourse were articulated around nodal point of republicanism. Islam, the clergy, jurisprudence and supreme leader jurist (Velayate Faghih) are rooted in traditionalism and the republic, people, law and freedom are rooted in modernism.

Although, regarding the symptoms, these two groups, were inherent conflicts and contradictions, but because of the following two reasons, differences and contradictions between them was not observed:

1. The metaphorical atmosphere of Islamic revolution discourse.
2. Charismatic leadership by Imam Khomeini.

In fact, the metaphorical atmosphere, which is formed in the circumstance of crisis of dominant discourse, is an ideal imaginative atmosphere. Being far from reality, due

to the crisis of dominant discourse available in the circumstance, the dichotomies of this discourse is subtle. Thus, people and political groups depict their aspirations and ideals into it. Here, the modernists were seeing their ideas of modernity in the republicanism and the traditionalists were searching for their ideals in their interpretation of Islamic thoughts in their mind.

The most important cause of formation of massive unity of people under the flag of the Islamic revolution and the creation of the metaphorical atmosphere was the charismatic character of Imam Khomeini. In fact, Imam's character was a main factor of being hegemonic of discourse of the Islamic revolution and is continuing. Imam was like nodal point that whole signifier's discourse of Islamic revolution was articulated together around his charismatic character. This feature made the conflict between the signs derived from the traditionalism and the modernism out of sight.

Regarding the metaphorical atmosphere and the presence of Imam's charismatic characters, conflicts and disputes among political groups did not find the opportunity to surface. With the loss of this metaphorical and the demise of Imam Khomeini, the gap between political groups in Iran was divulged.

The most important reason for the destruction of the metaphorical atmosphere, which was forged in responding to the needs of time, is that whenever a

discourse attempts to run up a political system and practically administer it to a society, this metaphorical atmosphere will gradually move away from the general state and pervasiveness, because in practice it is impossible to bring goals and desires of all political groups together. For this reason, weaker groups are marginalized, while the strong ones obtain all the power. With restriction on the metaphorical atmosphere of the discourse of the Islamic revolution among the various political groups, only the traditional Islamist discourse becomes the hegemony. In fact, between 1980 to 1998, those parts of the discourse of the Islamic revolution that were rooted in the modernism were marginalizing and the traditional part, which was formed, based on "Islamism", was outstanding.

In fact, in the first decade of the Islamic revolution alongside the metaphorical atmosphere and the Imam's charisma and personality, another important factor called the Iraqi war against Iran played an important role in bringing the Islamist into relief and marginalizing other discourses. Islamists utilized the evidence with "national security" to push the other evidences of "freedom", "law", and "democracy" to the sideline and accused the other discourse, which were carrying these evidences, to being the "Other". Indeed, they were introduced as the enemy of the Islamic republic. Furthermore, having used the dominant conditions and governed the country by eliminating approach towards those discourses, Islamist began to provide the ground for them. Ending the war in 1367, the Imam Khomeini's death in1368, and the lack of persons with same personality characteristics and charisma provided the areas for raising the gap between political groups.

The pure charismatic hegemony does not last long only by itself. It only continues until the end of present life and the life of his charisma. After that, the charisma turns into tradition, or legal entity, or combination of both (Weber, 1964). Therefore, when in 1989 after the conflicts over the succession of the charisma were ended, the charisma eventually became a legal entity. The Supreme leader entity finally replaced by the charisma turned into the central nodal point for the traditional Islamists or the conservative Islamists.

The second decade of the Islamic revolution began with the death of the charisma, the end of war, and the loss of metaphorical atmosphere of the early time of the Islamic revolution was accompanied by providing the conditions for the emergence of the modern discourse again. This time, the new elements of the modernity appeared in the new shapes. And the conflict between the traditionalism and the modernism was detected in the new form. This new shape of the modernity appeared while covering with a kind of "Islamism "and a new interpretation of the "People" in the form of "The Religious Democracy". Hence, the attempt to highlight the elements of Islam, which are compatible with modernity, was more. The spiritual leader of the new

movement called the Seyed Mohammad Khatami ran for presidency as the leader of the discourse of the modernization and the reform in the seventh presidential election. Khatami with the new approach toward the political and governmental issues, attempted to articulate the evidences of those Islamic revolution's discourses, which had been marginalized in the new form of discourses.

By the time of entering the scene seventh presidential election, Seyed Mohammad Khatami was an unknown figure for the public. There were only two important points on his records; first, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and secondly, the chairman of the Department of National Library. Either experience or history of his hade made a cultural figure for people and his acquaintance. In addition, some other personality components such as, beauty, being tasteful and talented speakers, and being trustworthy and influential, had given the credit to him that was considerable by others. Apart from his personality characteristics, the discourse was raised by Khatami and his supporters, in comparison with his rivals and was completely new and effective.

Khatami's speech style and discourse's concepts exposed a cultural thinker and thought processor instead of a politician in the community. Seyed Mohammad Khatami addressed the elite, students, women and youth rather than economic development and growth pattern, which people generally did not consent. Also, the civil and political development was highlighted in the eloquent speech that he made. While these factors were neglected as the serious civil and political rights by right party (conservative) during and before the election.

After the definite presence of Khatami in the election campaign, in his first official speech in the ceremony of restoring the Union of Islamic Associations of students, he dealt with the issues of policy and freedom of expression with a new approach. The civil society and the political development were the main aspects of the speech that he gave. In the announced plans of Khatami, which was released on the 5th of April 1998, the major goals and the solutions proposed were remarkable:

1. Tkjui7jiuuo avoids tyranny and to prevent breaking and violating the sanctity of freedom and legal rights, are the missions of government.
2. The Islamic state is a public servant, not a master of them.
3. Establishment of security is required to fight with breaking the law.
4. Efforts to remove the immoral behavior, hypocrisy, flattery, corruption and licentious are the jobs of government to do.
5. Trying to rule law and order is the condition for the economic, social, cultural and political progress.
6. Emphasis on active participation of all segments of the society and the acceptance of competition as the main way of participation by governments, are the undeniable

need "(Salam, 1998) providing press freedom not to cope and deal with emphasis on the law and the civil society reforms within the constitutional, separation of the task orientation and the ideological concepts are the other features of the discourse of Seyed Mohammad Khatami.

In this dialogue, the citizens of different political orientation were treated with respect and youths were considered as the grace and blessings instead of the problem. Khatami's discourse was faced with an unprecedented attention level on the 23rd May of 1998 (Dovome, 1376) by people. He won the election with more than 20 million votes. On the other hand, the powerful conservative discourse was forced to leave the power to its anti-discourse (the reform discourse) after 19 years of governing. One of the most important events after the Islamic revolution has happened. Accordingly, many political analysts who claimed the unique popularity of Khatami's discourse within Iranian people by its slogan of the most pivotal rule of civil society had put to end the political and social life of the discourse of the conservative party such that the conservative party's discourse had no chance of obtaining power again. However, the short life of the reform discourse was led by Khatami, and the popularity of the conservative anti-discourse led by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad put this incident among the important events after the Islamic revolution and the social and political movements of the world. In fact, the basic question is; why the reform discourse that began with unprecedented popularity within the Iranian people could not remain in the hegemonic status and lost the field to the traditional and conservative rival?

Although, while analyzing the why and how of the failure of the reform discourse hegemony, the within and outside factors were mentioned, and this research is trying to use the theory of discourse of Laclau and Mouffe for understanding and explaining the incident. This research attempts to use the aforementioned theory in explaining the role of the conservative discourse and mistakes of carriers and perpetrators of the reform discourse into the fail of the hegemony of the reform discourse.

Theoretical framework of research

A discourse can be dominant which is able to stabilize and block its intended signs, but no matter the stability, blockage would be temporary and inconstant. The dominant discourse has always been put aside and exposed to dislocation.

To show the temporariness of the meaning of signifiers, Laclau and Mouffe use the word "moment". Therefore, it is possible that the stabilized meaning of a moment become unstable. This instability is called „dislocation" that initiates from the lower levels, that is, the meaning of the signifier continues to the highest levels of universally

dominant discourses. The world is built upon these dislocations and the social system is always bewildered in stability and dislocation. In Laclau"s and Mouffe"s theory, the concept of dislocation refers to events and crises that challenge the hegemony of discourses. This idea that no discourse can completely be stabilized and be dominant forever is the center of philosophy of this theory (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). No discourse can eternally be dominant as well as; no discourse can eternally be put aside. Rather, they can usually reconstruct themselves. Discourses, which are put aside or suppressed, are always going to dislocate the dominant discourse, take its hegemonic status, and dislocate semantic stability of the dominant discourse by using different mechanisms and finally make its hegemony kind of problematic. Some of these mechanisms are:

The deconstruction strategy of the dominant discourse

The deconstruction strategy of a discourse changes the central points, moments, factors of discourse from its determined meaning and content and gives it another meaning (Tajik, 2004). Hegemony and deconstruction are two sides of a coin. Hegemony closes a signifier to a certain signified and relative stability of the meaning of a sign. While, by attributing different meaning and signified to that signifier, deconstruction distances the signified rival discourse attributed to that signifier and redefines it, and thus, breaks the hegemony of the appointed discourse (Laclau, 1993).

Absorption of floating signifiers

In their analysis of the conditions of making a discourse hegemonic, Laclau and Mouffe discussed on an area named the field of discursivity. In this area, there are meanings that the hegemonic discourse is unable to absorb. In other words, any song has a chain of meaning. A discourse absorbs a meaning and rejects others in proportion to its desired meaning regime (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Most of semantic concepts are always out of semantic regime of dominant discourse and are freed to wander. In this situation, the discourses that are rivals to the hegemonic discourse waiting for the failure of its hegemony try to absorb the signs of the area of the rival"s field of discursivity and articulate these wandered terms.

Magnifying and putting aside

Magnifying and putting aside are mechanisms by which the discourses try to magnify their strengths, putting aside their weaknesses or vice versa, putting aside the

strengths of others or enemies while magnifying their weaknesses. Depending on the conditions and facilities they have, the discourses use several methods to magnify and put aside others. Social movements, protests, contests, assassinations, legal and economical mechanisms, police, mass media and so on are all tools to magnify and put aside.

Difference logic, equivalence logic

By forming equivalence chains in which signs are arranged and placed in contrast with other chains, discourses can form their identity jointly. Identities are changeable as well as, discourses (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002). In a semantic chain, equivalence logic which acts creates the chain of equal identities among different factors aims to mix the main signs with other signs during the process of articulating. In this process, the special identities arranged in line are placed against negative identities that seem to be threatening (De vos, 2003).

By ignoring the existing differences in society, the dominant discourse is to exhibit a uniform and equal picture of the society. Any discourse that is able to create an extensive semantic regime and puts all requests and demands in an equal chain can be hegemonic. However, the difference logic tries to magnify differences, disagreements, and delimitations in society and acknowledge their existence. To reconstruct and return to power, the discourses that have been put aside try to disturb the equivalence logic of the dominant discourse and dominate the difference logic. By raising political disagreements and delimitations in society and dislocating the dominant semantic regime, these discourses can finally cause the dominant discourse to have hegemonic failure. Regarding the dislocation of the dominant discourse caused by the put-aside discourses, we can name the attempts of the conservative discourse for hegomonically failing the reform discourse. By dominating the reform discourse with the leadership of Mohammad Khatami in 1997, the conservative discourse used all his power and capabilities to limit reformists in the crises of legitimacy, acceptability, and efficiency, dislocate the reform discourse, and put it out of power-in the margins of political changes. The parameter, which helped conservatives in dislocating the reform discourse, was the strategic mistakes of bearers and agents of the reform discourse. In the present paper, we study how the conservative discourse used the aforementioned mechanisms to dislocate the semantic regime of reformists.

To put away reforms from the course of legitimacy, acceptability and efficiency, the conservatives used different strategies. The strategies strengthened by the mistakes of reformist made reformists not to be able to reach many purposes such as stabilizing the discourse of

political development by dislocating the reform discourse.

The strategy of the conservatives to dislocate the reform discourse

The most important strategies that the conservatives employed to defeat the hegemony of the reform discourse and make it inefficient are as follows:

Deconstructing the nodal point of the reform discourse

One of the most important concepts that must be considered in deconstructing a discourse is nodal point. Nodal point is a sign that arranges other signs around it. The nodal point constitutes the core of each discourse and if it faces dislocation, all discourse will collapse. The attraction of this core absorbs other signs. For example, the nodal pint of liberalism is freedom and the concepts like government, person and equality will be meaningful in the light of it. A discourse can step forward in the course of success that closes its intended signifiers by relying on its nodal point. In other words, this discourse must stabilize its intended and ideal semantic regime in the public mind, even if temporary, and satisfy people.

The discourses, which are put aside by the dominant discourse, can take the hegemonic status of dominant discourse only if they can be able to deconstruct its nodal point. By putting aside their desired signifier which dominant discourse was determined for, the conservative discourse used two mechanisms to dislocate the reform discourse. By means of software and hardware power, the conservatives deconstructed it, and then confined it in the meaning vagueness.

Deconstruction from the nodal point of reforms discourse

The discourse of reformist articulated the factors such as people, law and freedom that all were rejected from the discourse of revolution (in the beginning revolution of Iran), but still existed in the field of discursivity of political order. In this articulation, other factors such as "civil society" and "reforms" turned into moments of the reformist discourse. All the signs articulated in the discourse of the Islamic revolution were gathered around the central point or the nodal point of people (Soltani, 2008).

To deconstruct from the nodal point of the discourse of reformist, the conservative discourse acted strongly effective. This discourse tried to put the reforms out of its political course and took it to its desired course, the cultural and economical. By choosing the nodal point of people and the signifiers such as civil society that were shaped based on the nodal point, the conservatives tried

to represent a definition of the nodal point of the reform discourse that could be completely different from the reformists" definition. The conservative discourse tried to deconstruct the rival"s discourse and separate the nodal point of it from its signified. By possessing the software and hardware power, reaching consensus and defining the signs in a particular way, the conservative discourse tried to make the desired discourse hegemonic rather than influencing subjects" mind.

The reform discourse represented a definition of people. Based on this definition people are the authorities who can announce something lawful. In contrast, the conservative discourse represented a definition according to which people discover Velayat (guardianship) that is a lawful factor (Soltani, 2008).

Civil society is another signifier around with which semantic regime has been created. When the government of reforms faced drastic crises such as serial murders, the campus event, disability to solve economical problems, increasing inflation and so on; the conservative discourse using software and hardware power tried to seduce public opinion, on which all the crises began when the reform discourse suggested a signifier named „Civil society". What came out as the result of this belief was that the civil society was the main bearer of problems and crises of society. Using different mechanisms, the conservative discourse deconstructed the semantic regime of the reform discourse and disturbed the shaped semantic structures in the people"s mind.

In the software war with conservatives, some of the journals of reformists published irritant issues that gave the best opportunity to conservatives. By understanding the sensitivities of people, the conservatives magnified this writing style, and eliminated the rival by showing the contradiction and heterogeneity of this style with the knowledge regime of the society. In this software, reformist tried to attack the nodal point of the conservatives that was Velayat (guardianship). This attack was in the areas of politics, basic rights, epistemology, political philosophy, culture, ideology and economics. A brief study of the journals of the country show that ambiguities from different scopes in the journals of reformists as essays, interviews and reports published from 1998 to 2000 were the most important and irritant ambiguities that targeted both the power of the rival and pleasant values of group. These ambiguities were in the areas of politics, basic rights, epistemology, political philosophy, culture, ideology, and economics and are mentioned briefly:

1. Politics: Taliban"s commands and enacted laws of Iran are of the same kind and are both derived from the thought of immaturity, dedicated to the immature societies (Rahe no, 1998).
2. Basic rights: The absolute Velayat (guardianship) is eliminating the constitutional law and nullifying the principles that determine the duties of leadership.
3. Epistemology: Islamic commandments are mixed with myths and if they are cleaned from myths, they will easily be changeable during the time. For example, veil is mythical, but not for protecting the chastity. Chastity must be protected, but this protection is done in the same way at any time and is the way that must be chosen by conventions (Zanan, 1998).
4. Political philosophy: Velayate faghih (the supreme leadership) does belong neither to primacy nor to secondary principles of religion, and there is no reason for this (Kian, 1998).
5. Ideology: without the control of people, every man and even the innocents are exposed to depravity (Asre, 1999).
6. Economics: the Islamic republic is weak in economic management. During the last twenty years of revolution, the rate of economical growth has been 1%. This very slow growth rate is due to the backwardness of the enacted laws and appointing of inefficient individuals who were around the leadership and the council of leadership (Azadi, 1998).

Some of the newspapers directly debated the idea of secularism. For example, Norouz newspaper tried to theorize the idea of secularism in its editorial and wrote: "Although, religion and politics link together because of public culture and demand, and influence each other; they belong to two different worlds" (Norouz, 2003).

The irritant behaviors and acts of reformists gave the best opportunity to the conservatives to make empty the signifier of civil society and from the meaning reformists chose for the central point of civil society. They said that reformists are going to secularize the society (of Iran) and put aside religion thus, leading to accepting the cultural values and constituents of West. Therefore, the government of reforms is the greatest factor of cultural invasion.

Semantic ambiguity

Another problem of the Dovome khordad party, which showed the depth of its theoretical crisis, was semantic ambiguity in the intended discourse that helped the conservatives discourse to deconstruct the reform discourse more easily.

With respect to keywords, khatami"s discourse covered new categories used by different social ranges according to their thoughts. Semantic ambiguity can be seen as the interpretation of the leader of reforms about civil society. When reformists could not create a modern method to make the signifier of civil society hegemonic, they infrastructurally stepped toward deconstructing the signifier of civil society in a western form and announced their meaning and purpose of the civil society of Madina-ol-Nabi (city of the holy prophet of Islam). This qualified

utopia has its own characteristics" and constituents. In Madina-ol-Nabi, God is the only ruler and the will of people is along the will of god. In this society, people are not those who can announce the rulers" power lawfully. The prophet and Velayat (guardianship) are the nodal point, while the nodal point of reforms is people.

Some considered this literature as the keywords whose operational interpretation has no place in the framework of our national and Islamic traditions, while others considered it as being related to and suitable for the new atmosphere of the country. For example, when the term of civil society was presented and its historical document was sent to Madina-ol-Nabi, any man who knew the prophet"s rules and the holy status of civil society considered this disharmonious integration as a combination of the western methods with real Islam. Anyone who is familiar even a little with the sociology literature of west knows that the rudimentary needs in the civil society are humanism, liberalism, human rights, constitutionalizing and not having the red lines in ethics in a western form. Therefore, the active forces in the very inside of social-political issues were pulled to the poles of Khatami"s discourse. In other words, Madina-ol-Nabi that Khatami sketched satisfied no diplomacy in action. Thus, some relied on the values and principles belonging to the Dovome Khordad movement, while the second group relied on the pure western discourse and the third group blindly accepted Khatami"s discourse for accompanying him in the sovereignty. The fourth group who were common people considered the welfare and peace as the main issue and no discourse could theoretically influence them (Ganji, 2004).

The project of Madina-ol-Nabi caused the differences, in terms of which the discourse of reform shaped its identity comparing it to the semantic regime of the conservative discourse to be eradicated. The discourse of reforms with the semantic regime based on democracy and poetical development competed with the rival discourse. In addition to failing the nodal point of the reform discourse, the Madina-ol-Nabi with the nodal point of Velayat led to making other concepts and statements of the discourse inefficient.

Besides, the reform discourse that did not want to pull back from its early status, it turned to the terms that the rival intended, because its identity was generally shaped in the semantic regime they defended. Discourses gained their identity based on the differences that did exist in their semantic regime in comparison with the semantic regime of the rival discourse. Because they faced inefficiency, the keywords lost their power to influence. Therefore, these discourses had to repeat the terms, consequently; this caused the terms to be difficult to understand. Finally, this difficulty led to the crisis of identity that resulted in putting aside the reform discourse for a while and collapsing its hegemony (Taleghani, 2009).

By the project of Madina-ol-Nabi, Khatami helped the

rival deconstruct the nodal point of the reform discourse more easily. Naturally, Madina-ol-Nabi is qualified for the signified like Velayat (guardianship), justice, and Islamic values and these were the signifiers constituting the semantic regime of the conservative discourse. Thus, reformists had to continue the course the conservatives wanted them to follow and because of this, the signifier of reforms having a remarkable hegemony on the public opinion in the early years of formation, declined gradually and got excluded from the course of glory.

Absorbing the floating signifiers

The regime of the reform discourse, which consists of signifiers like democracy, civil society, freedom, political development and etc, was not able to use concepts belonging to the areas of economics, values of revolution, cultural invasion, and national security. Therefore, the conservatives could easily use this semantic area against reformists and create a new semantic area by magnifying the economic signs, value norms and holy models. In their semantic regime, the conservatives absorbed floating signifiers the reform discourse was unable to absorb.

Disagreement of the reform discourse with the dominant knowledge regime and lack of attention to the economical development were among the most important damages that put the conservatives into an invasive situation.

Contradiction with the knowledge regime of society

The knowledge regime means all the relationships that are formed based on epistemology in a special time and keeps the unity of the concepts of that special time. This regime can rely on human-based, environment based or unity-based concepts (Por fard, 2004).

At any time, an episteme or the truth regime and knowledge regime is dominant, and the tendencies, imaginations, will, orientations and people"s demands are shaped based on it. A discourse must be able to confirm with the truth and knowledge regime (value-norm) of society.

The dominant knowledge regime in Iran is a religious knowledge regime that depends on wording and it is wording-based. Any discourse willing to be hegemonic in Iran must be in complete contradiction with the knowledge regime. This knowledge regime can be criticized, but cannot be rejected. Regardless of all the sensitivities toward dominant knowledge regime in Iran, reformists tried to challenge ideas and concepts that form this regime. Besides, they could not establish a new discourse according to the episteme that was formed in the onset of Dovome Khordad. Without considering the special cultural, traditional and historical situations in

Iran, they went further so fast.

Reformists liberalized the political atmosphere of the country, and bravely assigned the role of in-charge social institution to press in the lack of civil institutions and political parties. On the other hand, they suddenly encountered a situation completely different from the time prior to Dovome Khordad; the press could not logically melt the social structure in the political structure.

The thronging of published newspapers and magazines and losing the control of them gave the conservatives the best opportunity, and they could ban these newspapers and magazines being guilty for insulting the values of society. Although, most of these bandings were along with the power war and political conflicts of two parties and liquidations for power, the influence of some people who had ideological and basic problems with the Islamic republic in the body of press questioned most of the values and traditions of the society. Reformists could not eliminate these few newspapers and magazines from the written media and the rival damaged the legitimacy of freedoms by the reformists‟ weaknesses. This rash and radical liberation that challenged the dominant knowledge regime of society took place in different areas of publication, music, movie and theatre.

Simple reaction to visual media and press and government‟s disability to manage them caused the powerful conservative party to be able to campaign against reforms by understanding the sensitivities of people. They even called this new condition „governmental cultural invasion‟ (Motahari, 2002). This was because the reformists wrongly understood the power of dominant conventions of society. By ignoring these conventions, they tried to integrate Iran into the liberal world of democracy hastily. The outcome of this management weakness and inactivity led to destroying, and then, vanishing all legitimate freedoms of moviemakers, press and writing elites, because reformists could not manage the opened political atmosphere.

During the reformists‟ opposition to religious and traditional factors and elements, which were against the process of development and progress, most of the important religious and traditional factors of society, which had nothing in common with the process of development, were attacked. In terms of having influential media like TV, on the other hand; the official sovereignty had the power to magnify the mistakes of reformists. For this, even if reformers were to make legal, civil and cultural liberation they could not establish a public base to protect themselves, because the bearers and agents of reforms ignored the religious believers of Iranian people in the process of modernization.

However, one of the most important issues that put the society in doubt to accompany the political reforms of Khatami, and in some cases, resisting these reforms were heterogeneity and contradiction of the reform discourse with the knowledge regime of society.

One of the factors that can cause reinforcing legitimacy is value and doctrinal uniformity between citizens and governors. This conceptual sharing causes both survival and continuity of political regime and continuity of people obedience (Parsons, 1964). However, the reforms government failed to do this.

Without considering conceptual and cultural readiness of the public, which was extremely dependent upon religious and traditional institutions, the reforms government made a radical reform in movie and theatre following liberalizing publication that led to objection of moderate reformist to some extent. By doing this, they shocked the changing society of Iran. (Emadedin Baghi, 2004) for example, in his book titled „the movement of democratic reforms in Iran‟ objected a novel for promoting immoral matters such as toppling and homosexuality.

The sudden liberalizing of the media atmosphere of the country did not go with the acceptance capacity of society, and this caused conservatives to enjoy the high capability of mobilizing the religious beliefs of people against the performance of the reforms government by understanding the sensitivities of people. They even succeeded in considering both the intended freedoms of reforms and inactivity the same thing, and made people believe that reforms are not going to take the society of Iran toward development and progress, but reformists are looking for ways of rejecting Islamic values and so on. Meanwhile, some of the owners of visual media who had the opportunity to do their immoral things took the chance and did the things that were never suitable for Islamic atmosphere of Iran.

Reformists neglected the role of religious and cultural beliefs in society and this caused the conservatives to articulate floating signifiers such as national security, revolutionary values, cultural invasion, Justice and economics, and to deconstruct the nodal point of reforms that was people and its secondary signifiers such as civil society, freedom, political development supported by the nodal point. Due to the strategic mistakes of reformists and bravely liberalizing the political and artistic atmosphere, the conservative discourse formed a new semantic regime to campaign against reforms.

Relying on economics and justice, and by adding a new signifier name clerical with a new meaning, the signifiers of cultural invasion and revolutionary values; the conservatives could form a semantic regime according to which the enemy-reformists, was considered to be the agents of cultural invasion who wanted to destroy pure Islamic values, but clerical protected them (Soltani, 2008).

The most important and basic point that was of no care for reformists was that in the modern renovation, even westerns concluded that we could not ignore traditional values of society to go toward development and this was in complete contradiction with normative-value regime of society.

Losian Pye and Sidny Verba believed that political development does not necessarily decrease the traditional values and increase rationality and impersonal efficiency, but that this idea can indicate the common values of people, their group and social emotions and most importantly, attention to loyalty and obligation standard of people (Pye and Verba, 1965).

Disregarding economical development

One of the problems that caused reformists to show little or no attention to the economy was their wrong understanding of people"s welcome to mottos like law, freedom, political development and civil society. By doing an incorrect evaluation of people"s welcome to their political mottos, reformists concluded that economical problems were not superior to other political behavior problems for people. They could not appropriately analyze the political behavior of people, and for this reason, about the brilliant vote to Khatami, they reached this wrong analysis. For example, Behzad Nabavi said"civil society is something which includes law, freedom and security and this is very important for us that people realized that the mentioned subjects were better than welfare" (Nabavi, 1999). By considering the early understanding of reformists about economy as the most important priority of election program, Behzand Nabavi said:

"We thought that it is necessary for Mr. Khatami to chant economical slogans, but we saw that it did not happen. Although he talked about civil society, political development, freedom, law and security, he gained more and more votes than his rivals" (Nabavi, 1999).

Reformists paid no attention to importance of economical and living problems and concentrated excessively on political development without any plan and this led to taking back of the early and unprecedented welcome of people to the reforms discourse thus, changing their decision toward the ant discourse of reforms. Because of this, when Mahmood Ahmdi Nejad was nominated in the ninth round of presidential election, people voted his programs unexpectedly, and elected him as the president. By using the weakness of reforms government that was disregarding economical development, the new conservatives articulated floating signifiers that had economical aspects, signifiers like justice and equality and etc.

When the reforms government could not confront economical crises such as unemployment, inflation, budget deficit, expensiveness, economical corruption, people tackled economical problems like before. This government was no longer able to satisfy people to remain on the way of political development and not to turn toward other ways. Then, instead of civil society and

its constituents, people wanted economical welfare, capital and more income. Directly and indirectly, they declared that hungry people did not seek freedom. Although, the hypothesis implying the better the economical performance and situation of country, the better opportunities for democracy, faced a few problem in the Middle East and disconformities of this hypothesis with more poor Arabic government was completely evident (Sedighi, 2006). But what happened from the constitutional time till now was the reverse of the earlier mentioned hypothesis, which confirmed the theory of lipset who said:"the better the economical situation of a nation, the more opportunities to stabilize and strengthen democracy" (Lipset, 1957). When the reforms government could not show its efficiency in economical development and was rejected by people, it gave the political power to its ant discourse. If the reforms government cared economical development as well as, political development, most of the crises in which it was confined could be solved.

Here, we are not going to repeat the minimalizing behavior of reformists in another way and vote to priority of economical development over political development. However, the purpose of what has been presented in this paper as disregarding the economical development was that reformists did not use all their power and tools to make their discourse hegemonic. The reform discourse, which became strong only by democratic connects, suddenly faced inflationary growth of premises in the linguistic atmosphere of society not inside the democratic discourse. These premises that referred to the concepts of progress, justice, culture and nationalism, brought down the uncontested sovereignty of democratic regime such that the democratic discourse had no opportunity to be superior in comparison with other discourses. Moreover, representing a different reading form democracy based on religious instructions led to emerging premises banned by the discourse of Dovome Khordad in such a way that some subjects like the sovereignty of people, the status of law, legitimacy base, relation of legitimacy with efficiency, responsibility and all concepts derived from democracy regime eventually took other meanings and signified (kakavand, 2001). This happened when reformists could not update the reforms discourse according to Khakini (2007). In fact, the reform discourse could not create a discourse that expansively covered the different tastes and demands of society with itself. This discourse was unable to absorb the existing floating signifiers in society. The conservative discourse absorbed these floating signifiers into its semantic regime, and in doing so, it made the dominance of reforms discourse face trouble.

Magnifying and patting aside

To dislocate reform discourse, the conservative discourse

attempted to put aside the strengths of reformists and magnify its weaknesses. In addition to articulating the floating signifier that the reform discourse was unable to absorb, the bearers and agents of the conservative discourse applied the use of crisis mechanism in their semantic regime to defeat reform discourse in a hegemonic way. These crises proved the inefficiency and weakness of reformists in the management of the country. The main and the most important things that prevented the discourse of political developments from being dominant were organic and continual extensions that the reform government faced. When the society faced several crises, groups and organization suggested legends that could remove all these crises, and tried to organize the type of identities suitable for public subject matters. Besides, when the metaphoric public- oriented characteristics and the feature of rejecting and criticizing the discourse of political development faded away, campaigning against it was not considered as the causes of its unity and consistency. This attribute could not show itself as a determinant and responsible framework of ever- increasing collection of various demands, and the rivals could not reconstruct all their political and ideological areas relying on criticizing the current state and turned it into a social attitude. Some of the most important crises, which put reformists in the course of inefficiency, were serial murders, the campus event, and the assassination of Saeid Hajarian.

Although, conservative used different strategies and techniques, in different economical, cultural and political areas, to campaign against reformists, one of the strategies to eliminate reformists from power course was creating connective channels between people and the reforms government could not control its connection with people due to weakness of communicative tools mostly affected by the power of conservatives. When the connective channel of reformists was removed, they could not exonerate themselves. By having the national media, conservatives tried to magnify the weaknesses of reformists and put aside their strengths.

Though, the reforms government attempted to strengthen the press, parties and civil institutions, these attempts needed a long-term period to stabilize these plans. They could not control their connection with people because they lacked a regular plan and did not have enough tools to connect, and conservatives cut most of their connective channels. One of the most important connective tools of reformists was press. Reformists were extremely dependent upon this non-capital organization such that the conservatives ruptured the connection of reforms with people radically with banning of the most important reforms newspapers. The factors that led to the extensive banning of press were damages and mistakes presented. These damages were due to the power of the conservatives and the mistakes of reformists:

1. The excessive insistence of some new paper owners

to create a liberalist regime: this normative regime considered freedom of publication and intervention of government as the basis in the press. Liberalist regime overemphasized the free circulation of information and this endangered the security and prestige of some citizens (Ramazan, 2007).
2. The press of reformists limited the performance of social control to criticizing and objecting the approaches of the conservative party and ignored the mistakes of the reforms government.
3. Creating a discourse based on the factors of democracy and challenging the norms accepted by the conservatives and the private zone of the conservatives" powers.
4. Political conflicts and power war of political blocks instead of dealing with problems and needs of people, engaging of independent press in the war of power between reformists and the conservatives caused conservatives to counteract and choose most of them.
5. The infiltration of some opposition leaders into press gave the conservatives the best opportunity to oppress press.

By magnifying the mistakes of reformists, the conservatives pretended that the reformist press was completely at the service of the opposition and continuation of their work was against the national security. For example, Hashemi Shahroudi, the current judicial chief in an answer to this question that „why do only reformist newspaper get closed?" Said: "antagonistic aspects of these newspapers are completely evident" (Abrar, 2000).

On the other hand, reformists relied only on some factors like people participation whose survival was dependent upon the success of reformists. Paying little or no attention to economy and knowledge regime and religion sensitivities of people in Iran, reformists gave the best opportunity to the conservatives to magnify the importance of economical ties in society. By mentioning the existing crises in Iran, the conservatives tried to make people believe that these problems arose after proposing "civil society" as the nodal point of the reforms discourse, and disenchanted people to establish civil society in which reforms government could grant their promises. Also by proposing a new signifier name economical justice as the nodal point of their discourse and using software and hardware power, they tried to make their discourse hegemonic.

Using all the powerful factors they had, the conservatives tried to magnify the problems especially economical problems of reformists. Moreover, in the light of welfare, economical justice, and attention to the poor and exurbanite society they gathered the frustrated groups of the society who became disappointed at reforms around the justice-based discourse, and changed the hegemonic status of the political development of

the discourse of reformists.

APPLYING DIFFERENCE LOGIC AND CONFRONTING THE EQUIVALENCE LOGIC

When reformists fought against the administrative power of a country, they acted in a way which made the conservatives conclude that if they did not use all their power to campaign against them, they would quickly be eliminated from the field of political, economical and social power and would be conquered by reformists. Because of this, the conservatives used all their power to make the programs of reformists inefficient and transferred this feeling unsafe to all traditional institutions and powers of the society. When a discourse comes into power, he must ensure that the authorities of traditional power in the society and the bearers of modern discourse are going to fight against their power, because initial and immediate campaign against authorities of traditional power forced them to find a way and they campaign against the modern discourse rapidly. First, they must be ensured that their power will never be invaded and then they can take their power back by this trust. The moderates must be cautious about the matter by gaining some degrees of rights and freedoms, the danger of authoritarian's reaction will be serious. Therefore, they must devise strategies to block their action.

The most important solution is to give oppositions this guarantee that they are not going to endanger their vital resources. Successfulness of this stage is dependent upon debates of the two parties reaching an agreement. An agreement by which the rules of practicing power is managed in such a way that there will be no threat for the vital resources of both parties. One thing that must be taken into consideration is that these agreements leads to non-democratic relationships in some cases, but what have been expected from them is providing long term state of reaching a democratic stage. This controls the extremists and destroys the moderates. With regards to emphasis on the elites" action and rejection of structural effects, some suggestions would be presented for the advocates of this theory:

1. The first is being cautious, that is presenting the requests of the moderates, supporting the systematic movement and choosing the principle of cooperation with the more moderate parties of government.
2. Another suggestion, is having a correct political analysis and this necessarily needs accurately viewing the intra-track and having limited and special expectations. Any deviation can endanger all the earlier mentioned process (Khaleghi, 2006).

Disobeying the rules of the game, reformists from the very first start attacked power resources and the heads of the opponent"s team and forced them to resist and fight seriously and harshly. One of the most important factors in creating the crises of legitimacy, acceptability and efficiency for the reform discourse were and are the software and hardware power of the conservatives, groups and institutions that always have great power and influence. If a modern discourse wants to be established in Iran, in addition to the power of the conservatives, it must obey all the rules in the campaign against them not to be captured by numberless factors and constituents of power. Disobeying the rules of the game, reformists lose the game. Reformists must destroy the symbols, institutions and myths of the conservatives" power slowly and unnoticeably not to be able to dislocate these myths and symbols of the discourse of political development in Iran.

One of the mechanisms of the conservatives to survive and to hegemony defeat the reform discourse is using the difference logic and breaking the equivalence chain that reformists created. The reform discourse could not put all the requests and demands of people in equivalence chain using the difference logic. The conservatives tried to magnify the differences, disagreements, and the current delimitation in society and dislocate the reform discourse by emphasizing those magnified things.

Although, the nodal point of the reform discourse was people, reformists tried to put the Iranian people in the center of their discourse despite all their ideological, racial, and tribal differences. They were looking for political freedom for all people, the equality between people known as the factor unity, and creating the equivalence chain in society. Their disability to create economical development and ignoring the living problems gave the best opportunity to the conservatives to magnify the current difference in society by absorbing the floating signifiers like economical justice.

By making a relation between economy and the current confusions and disorders in society, the conservatives considered reformists the factor of poverty, moral abnormalities and so on.

With regards to the class differences which was intensified in the light of the issue that reformists ignored economical development, the conservatives gave new signifiers such as economical justice, Islamic values, cultural invasion etc, and magnified the current differences among different classes of society. They chose poor and low-paid people and villagers as its target society and they considered extending poverty as the main factors of abnormalities in society.

By magnifying the problems and weaknesses of reformists, the conservatives tried to break the equivalence chain created by reformists around the signifier of people. By two-fold conflict between the poor and the rich, religious and secular, revolutionary and non-revolutionary, Muslim and non- Muslim, the conservatives broke the equivalence chain of the reform discourse.

CONCLUSION

Although, in evaluating the causes of the failure of the

reform discourse, most of the political analysts hint at the power of conservatives with a minimalizing view and believed that by having propagandistic, disciplinary and political powers, the conservative discourse is the main obstacle on the way of making the reform discourse hegemonic. However, what comes out as the conclusion of this discussion is that because of having intra-discourse problems, the reform discourse provides the essential background for the conservative discourse to change the hegemonic status of reforms.

The categories that have been presented by reformists could not reach the theoretical strength in the conceptual society, because they could not win the beliefs that were on behalf of demands and requests in the society. For example, mottos like freedom, law, power sharing, which were among the main signified of political development, were not manifested in beliefs like democracy and civil society. Moreover, the thoughtful elites who fed reforms, lacked theoretical consistency. Theoretically, these elites had different paragons. On one hand, these paragons were not understood accurately, and on the other hand, anyone insisting to make a copy of the paragons was wrongly understood. Consequently, reformists got anarchic theoretically. Some sought theoretical and conceptual principle of political development based on a completely Western model. These people insisted that the course of political development passed through two channels: Secularism and Humanism, consequently; they were to conventionalize the society and this was not suitable for the historical, religious, political and cultural aspects of Iran. Some others wanted to find the national and local signified for the signifier of political development and the belief of Madina-ol-Nabi got out of the very inside of it. The severe conflict between these two political thought ranges damaged the reformist party. Theoretical weakness from one side and the weakness of some leaders in understanding the theoretical principles of Dovome Khordad moved from the other side putting reforms in the status of crises such as legitimacy, acceptability and efficiency crises. The thought elites of reforms got away from political, social, economical, religious, and cultural realities and they could not be in touch with various classes of the society. They could not process and transfer their intended theoretical concepts. Thus, the people who astonishingly welcomed reformists and their mottos had no motive to continue cooperation and another welcome. They believed that what was given as a promise would never be granted, because the claimants did not have enough power to practice those mottos. Following the legitimacy crisis (people did not have a reasonable motive to support reforms), therefore; reformists encountered inefficiency (weakness in practicing their mottos). These two crises automatically led to the crisis of acceptability and public rejection. By using the damages and mistakes of reformist, thus, the conservatives could provide the essential situation to defeat the hegemony of the reform discourse. Therefore,

what reinforce the conservatives to put aside the reform discourse were the mistakes of bearers and agents of reforms.

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