

## The Media Function of the Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Iran (Research Type: Radio)

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### Abstract

The revolution of Iran in 1356 (1978) caused the falling of the monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, one of the significant conflict periods in the political history of twentieth-century Iran. The Islamic Revolutionary Movement is one of the most important and influential events of the contemporary period, which started a new process by challenging the existing order. The functionalist approach describes revolutions as socio-political pathology and seeks their causes in "Imbalance" and "Asynchrony." Functionalist theories assume that society is similar to a hypothetical system; therefore, we can analyse this constructed system. The revolutionary movement and its management in the community are affected by different institutions. The present study aimed to investigate the role of radio in this field. Today, the media has created a new kind of power with an intangible face with its speed and complexity. As a hot media, radio has a special place in establishing direct and comprehensive communication with the general public; therefore, we should evaluate its functions and dysfunctions. The present study aimed to answer the question of 'What role radio has played in the process and spread of the Islamic Revolution?' The results indicated that the radio has two functions and misfunctions. The role of operations is to create the capacity to perceive injustice in society, transmitting the values related to violence management, flourishing critical rationality, and educating the right-oriented and aggression. The role of misfunction is promoting a personal and ethnic fanatical framework, promoting violence as a habit, institutionalising violence in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals in society, and transmitting anti-values related to violence as a tool for the development and cohesion of revolutionary movements.

**Keywords:** Functional Model, Media Function, Radio, Movement.

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## Introduction

Iran's revolution in 1977 that caused the falling of the monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic is one of the significant periods of conflict in the political history of twentieth-century Iran. Modern theories of revolution have two main categories: psychological and functionalist sociology. Psychological theories mainly limit to how to create protests. They assume that as soon as dissatisfaction and protests arise, they automatically transform into collective action, violence, and revolution. Psychological theories seek the premise of revolution in human beings' "Psychological Turmoil." Therefore, the functionalist approach describes revolutions as socio-political pathology and seeks their causes in "Imbalance" and "Synchrony." Functionalist theories hypothesise that society is like a hypothetical system. Therefore, it is possible to analyse this constructed system (Bashiriyeh, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 18). Different institutions can affect the revolutionary movement and its management in society. The present study aimed to examine the role of radio media in this field. The mass media in any organisation as a power figure is an influential institution that plays an essential and effective role in society. By representing social issues, the media make them appear as the same realities in society (Farhangi et al., 2007 AD/1386 SH: 55). Maden and his colleagues have considered the media's role in developing the individuals' identities (Maden et al., 2014: 117). In this regard, radio has a special place as a hot media due to establishing direct communication with the audience, focusing on one of the audience's senses and covering a large number of general audiences. The present study aimed to analyse the critical theories of media function and its impact on the Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Iran with a focus on radio. The main question is 'What role did the radio media play in the process and expansion of the Islamic Revolution of Iran?'

## 1. Theoretical Literature

The functionalist paradigm aimed to explain the status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, the fulfilment of need and actuality. This paradigm creates the sociology of order-making in its complete, mature form. It emphasises the importance of recognising order, balance, and stability in society and how they continue (Borrell and Morgan, 2014 AD/1393 SH: 44). Many of the fundamental concepts of structural functionalism are derived from Spencer's work. According to him, society is an automated system that can be understood by examining its various elements or organs and their internal connection. On the other

hand, in evaluating the social functions, one must pay attention that a particular structure satisfies the need for a broader system (Ritzer, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 122). Fulfilling these needs, which is the philosophy of any strategy, is called system function (Scott, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 123). In the theory of mass media functions, the basic idea is that the media exists to meet the specific needs of society. Jean Caseno believes that understanding the effects of the mass media is possible when considering their tasks. Therefore, a thorough and conscientious evaluation of mass media function requires determining the demands and expectations of the various social classes. But Lasswell has examined the functions of these devices with an overview. He has defined three main tasks for these devices: protecting the environment by controlling the news, correlating society components in response to environmental needs, and transferring social heritage from generation to generation (Khalesi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 283). In conclusion, the mass media meet the needs of society that are their functions. The present study aimed to identify them by focusing on the radio to explain the impact of radio on the Islamic Revolution movement through their explanation.

## **2. Media and Its Functions**

### **2.1. Media and Its Supervising Role**

As one of the powerful components of civil society and influencing public opinion, the media has significant political and non-political roles. Supervising is one of the most important of them. Harold Lasswell and Charles Wright have done the most classical studies in this field rather than the contemporary research done by Castells; they emphasised the supervising role of media as one of its primary functions. They believed in the severe role and function of the media in society. According to them, the press supervises the environment, creates social solidarity in responding to the environment, transmits cultural heritage and entertainment, and fills leisure time. Sharam also mentioned guarding the media by expressing the roles of teacher and guide. The press can exert several significant influences on the political power of society through their oversight:

First, the change and transformation of citizenship applications include increasing, modifying or decreasing them. Then, changes in government functions include reforming government performance and the image of the people. Finally, change in the ideological cohesion of a society comprises strengthening and weakening values (Sadati, 2010 AD/1389 AD: 193-194).

### **2.2. Mass Media and the Social Construction of Reality**

The mass media play a prominent role in shaping and processing the social

construction of reality. Through the meanings prevalent in everyday life, the mass media significantly impact the construction of social reality and strongly influence social activities. They affect all individual and social spheres and play a decisive and influential role in charting society members' beliefs, situations, and attitudes and are an essential source for the promotion of political values. These media only reflect some models of reality; therefore, they try to create a mentality for us.

According to the social construction of reality theory, facts are continuously produced and reproduced through social interactions; today, the media construction of reality is crucial according to which particulars are continually produced and reproduced (Farhangi, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 57-58).

### **2.3. Media and Agenda Setting**

McCombs and Shaw conducted the first field study on agenda-setting. The mass media focuses on specific issues. They make public images of political figures. They constantly present topics that the masses should think, know and feel about (Surin and Tankard, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 328). Immediately, Funkhouser published research after publishing McCombs and Shaw's work about agenda-setting. According to the Funkhouser model, media coverage had little relationship with the facts. In addition to the actual flow of events, Funkhouser has proposed a list of mechanisms that influence media attention to an issue. One of these mechanisms, called media adaptation to a flow of events, is that when similar patterns of affairs continue, they will appear as "Different" themes (Surin and Tankard, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 351).

### **2.4. Media and Knowledge Gap**

With increasing the flow of mass media information into the social system, the sections of the population with a higher socioeconomic status acquire this information faster than sections with a lower base. So, the gap in knowledge between these sectors increases instead of decreasing. Philip Tichenor et al. proposed this hypothesis in 1970; it is called the "Knowledge Gap" (Surin and Tankard, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 363). The relative gap in knowledge between the affluent and the less affluent would increase. Tichenor et al. have presented five main reasons for this hypothesis, including the communication abilities of those with high socioeconomic status are different from those with low socioeconomic status. Individuals' levels of education are diverse, and education prepares the individual for basic information processing tasks such as reading, comprehension, and recall (Train, 2013: 832).

### **2.5. General Aggression Model**

The general aggression model is a behavioural-psychological theory that examines the relationship between media violence and aggression (Kronberger

et al., 2005 AD: 726). According to this model, personality variables (such as hostility) and situational variables (such as the experience of violence and excitement in the media) influence a person's internal states, including cognitive, emotional and arousal variables, which affect a person's violent behaviour. In this model, the mental effect, the emotional impact and arousal are plotted, and finally, the choice of a violent behavioural response is made (Anderson et al., 2004: 202).

### **3. The Radio Media Function on the Islamic Revolution of Iran Movement**

The establishment of radio in Iran is related to the wireless telegraph that entered Iran in 1305. In 1311, wireless institutions were developed. After the radio was established, after providing the preparations, the radio was inaugurated by his crown prince at 10:00 AM on Ordibehesht 4, 1319, simultaneously with the anniversary of Reza Shah's coronation. In 1336, the name of Radio Tehran was changed to Radio Iran, and later, along with Radio Iran, a second transmitter called Radio Tehran was employed, of which, in the beginning, only music was broadcast (Hosseini Harandi, 2018 AD/1397 SH). The radio changed its programs after Shahrivar 1320 regarding the change of the king and the atmosphere of freedom created. Religious programs that had no place in the minds and thoughts of the founders of the radio were included in the radio programs five months after the fall of Reza Shah. Therefore, another issue that had a special place in the policy-making of radio programs after Shahrivar 1320 is religious discourse. At this time, the first severe and crucial criticism of radio, which is available in writing today, was made by Sayyid Mojtaba Nawab Safavi, the leader of the Fadaiyan-e-Islam group. In *The Handbook of Facts*, Nawab not only criticises radio programs in presenting his purpose and plans but also has plans and solutions for them. He was aware of the influence of radio on the thoughts and culture of society and believed that it should be reformed at once according to the standards of Islam. Therefore, he considered radio necessary and valuable for establishing the questioned Islamic government. Hence, Nawab Safavi demanded the spread of the same traditional teachings through the new. According to him, the radio belonged to the nation, and he called it the "Radio of the Muslim Nation." Nawab Safavi's radio was obliged to play Azan to the believers on time and teach the Qur'an and the general teachings and moral teachings of the Al-e Muhammad (PBUH) in simple and straightforward language, not only for Muslim Iranians but to all Muslims in the world and even all the world (Mokhtari Esfahani, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 97). Therefore, assigning

religious sermons to competent people was one of the points emphasised in the review commission. Apart from Hossein Ali Rashed, the famous ministerial spokesman in the history of radio, people such as Morteza Motahhari, Sayyid Mostafa Khorasani, Abdul Hussein ibn al-Din, Sayyid Hossein Sadr Shirazi, Hekmat Al-e Agha and Sayyid Mohsen Behbahani engaged in religious preaching and propaganda on the radio. The regime's propaganda policy for broadcasting religious programs was a cautious one. It was always careful that the programs did not provoke the people's religious feelings or be objected to by spiritual assemblies. The radio began its indirect oversight role and function by broadcasting religious agenda until the movement's formation. Simultaneously with the movement spread, government employees gradually joined the revolution and its slogans. They strongly condemned the method of the military government and their allies on radio and television for not reflecting the real demonstrations and historical march of the Iranian nation during the days of Tasua and Ashura. Radio and television, as an essential database in the society, by giving awareness at different levels, caused the reduction of the knowledge gap between people in various strata and led the nation towards a procedural unity. Apart from the performance of the domestic media, the role of the foreign media was also crucial in the midst of the revolution. During the revolution, the Persian section of BBC Radio became a space for reflecting on the news of the regime's opponents and the Imam's statements. This happened coincided with when the purchase of shortwave radio did not require a license. People's use of radio to hear the news that they were present at the centre was expanding day by day. The army officers in Manzariye Qom did not listen to the report of Radio Iran because they believed that Radio Iran was lying, and they listened to all the information on BBC Radio. Radio Iraq also created a program called "Clergy Movement", which supported the method of Imam Khomeini (Mokhtari Isfahani, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 22-97). Using the functional model of national media in managing the anger of individuals in a society designed by Mahmoudi and his colleagues in 1396 and based on the principle of generalizability and replacement with radio media, the present study aimed to investigate the role of radio on the Islamic Revolution movement. In this model, based on the grounded theory method, the main and sub-categories are introduced; before explaining the results of the functional model and using them in the present study, we will explain the six components of the paradigm. These paradigms include causal conditions, phenomena-oriented contexts, mediating conditions, strategies, and consequences.

A) **Casual conditions.** Categories (states) affect the primary type (Bazargan,

2014 AD/1393 SH: 10). Subjects, natural and social, necessarily have causal forces and capabilities (causal conditions) that, in combination with external contextual conditions and conditional factors (mediating conditions), can cause events.

- B) **Core category.** An incident or event that the series of interactions focuses on controlling and managing (Hojabriyan et al., 2014 AD/1393 SH: 222). The phenomenon answers the question, ‘What is happening here?’
- C) **Context.** The context indicates a series of unique characteristics that distinguish a phenomenon; in other words, the conditions of a particular context are effective in strategies.
- D) **Intervening conditions.** These conditions facilitate or limit action/interaction strategies in a particular context.
- E) **Action/interaction strategies.** The strategies were created to control, manage and deal with the phenomenon under specific experimental conditions.
- F) **Consequences.** All actions and reactions in response to or managing and controlling a phenomenon have consequences (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 131-133). After explaining the six components of a paradigm, we can use the results of the designed functional model for radio media.

**Table 1- Main and sub-categories of a functional model**

Row	Main Category	sub-Category
1	Phenomena-oriented	Violent media
2	Causal conditions of violence	Blind violence
		Oversimplification of violence
3	Violence management strategy	The flourishing of critical rationality
		Right-oriented aggression training
		Overcoming violence skills
4	Intermediate conditions for violence	Recall factors
5	Underlying conditions for violence	Limitations faced by individuals in society
6	Consequences	Equilibrium

The present study aimed to determine the role of radio in the form,

function, and unfunctional of the Islamic revolutionary movement. This aim tried to identify the relationship of other categories - conditions, contexts, strategies, consequences - with the phenomena-oriented violent media, particularly this relationship with radio as an effective medium. In the Islamic Revolutionary Movement, the management of violence by individuals in society via radio requires the study of three categories causal, contextual, and conditional (mediating) conditions. Its functions and unfunctions are displayed explicitly in these three sections. According to Table 1, the causal conditions for aggression in society are fanatical or blind violence and oversimplification of violence, which has become a habit in societies. According to Smelser, social movements are a kind of social action that arise due to normative inflammation and, according to Thorne, arise in the clash of historical class identities. As a stimulus to class identity, radio during the revolution caused and promoted cultural conflict or inflammation (Zahid, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 68). Thus, some radio unfunctions promote personal and ethnic fanatical frameworks and encourage violence as a habit. Therefore, this media should create mediating conditions for managing violence in society and identify the factors calling for violence, including personality, social, environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The media is confronted with messages that show the utilitarianism of individuals, extremist perfectionism, power-seeking, etc., or vice versa, with news that contains the content of responsibility-accepting, unity, empathy, justice, etc. It will lead to modelling and imitation of people and, as a result, the internalisation of these negative or positive behaviours in the audience. In other words, values or anti-values are a subset of ideology, which is characterised by: "A statement of the goals, objectives and missions of a movement, for a set of criticisms and condemnations an existing structure that the movement is attacking and is trying to change it." (Zahid, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 74)

Thus, in Islamic ideology, beliefs and values are propagated by radio. This communicational instrument has its effects, and sometimes, regarding its nature, it either accelerates or slows down the influence. With this trend, the leaders mobilise forces to manage the violence of individuals in society.

It can be named the "Function of transmitting values related to the management of violence" or the "Function of transmitting counter-values related to violence." On the other hand, the management of violence in society depends on the readiness of the field and the existence of environmental capabilities. Denial of violence in Islam and considered dangerous is rooted in the high dignity of human beings, which can create rooted love and affection and respect in the way we look at human beings. According



to Shahid Motahhari, the freedom of human beings should not be limited by factors such as the natural environment or the social environment to the fulfilment of humanity. Based on the results, economic, social, and information constraints are a factor against the management of violence in society. As the movement takes place in the social, economic and data fields etc., these fields provide opportunities for the movement and create limitations; in other words, these fields also enable to build and limit. Each constraint plays its part in shaping the people's personality in society and providing their behaviour and ultimately the direction of the movement. Radio has played an essential role in the Islamic Revolution based on the facilities and limitations facing members of society and its strengthening and highlighting. Therefore, one of the radio unfunctions is creating and strengthening restrictions on the management of violence, or in other words, to provide the basis for this. The radio's role in informing about the class gap between individuals in society and the existing restrictions for them caused the perception in the public that distributive justice has not been observed in the community, and the community has two classes with economic and social bases, high and low. Such a perception, even if false, will lead to creating and increasing the violence against so-called upper-class people. Thus, one of the functions of radio media in line with the revolutionary movement is creating a perception of injustice in society and promoting violence as a tool to overcome this perception. In addition to causal, external (context) and mediating conditions, the two topics of strategy and outcome are also related to the central phenomenon of this research, the motivating medium that will not be free of violence. According to Table 1, the last role of radio is its strategy to manage individuals' violence in society and shape the movement in a controlled way. These strategies are flourishing of critical rationality, training of right-oriented aggression and skills training to overcome violence.

The strategy of right-oriented aggression is based on intimacy, thematic balance, reinterpretation of anger, and versatility. Also, the skills learning strategy for overcoming violence is based on interpersonal belonging and effective communication. Finally, flourishing critical rationality will create components such as tact and promote consultation and discourse in individuals. By creating a connection between the five mentioned components (phenomena-oriented, causal conditions, mediating conditions, contextual conditions and strategy), the final result of managing the violence of individuals and the event of the revolutionary movement will be achieved. The final result of the introduced pattern is creating equilibrium. The radio was used to form the action and get to its absolute path, known as the Thermidor.

### **Conclusion**

- One of the unfunctions of radio in the early stages of the Islamic Revolutionary Movement is promoting blind violence or the instrumentalisation of violence. By using stereotyped frameworks based on personal, racial and ethnic prejudices in its programs, the radio will promote blind violence in society, which can be called the unfunction of nurturing the unique and ethnic fanatical frameworks. Broadcasting of events during the revolution on the pulpits of mosques caused the audience to perceive radio programs on the eve of the process that had violent and exciting content as an empirical fact. In addition, the broadcasting of such programs, which is displayed as a tool, can lead to the formation of promoting violence as a habit dysfunction.

- Among the mass media, radio can have beneficial or destructive short-term and long-term effects on its audience regarding its comprehensive coverage and constant communication. The public perception of violence is the radio broadcasts violent verbal and emotional messages. So, if we do not say that radio can institutionalise violence in people, it can at least increase the intensity of anger against people in society. In other words, radio has played an essential role in institutionalising violence in the attitude and behaviour of individuals in the community in the revolutionary movement.

- Among the categories that can be effective as mediating conditions in the management of community violence are recall factors. The recall factors include personality, social, and environmental components that influence violence. Therefore, radio has a vital role in shaping the thoughts of everyone through imitating the audience and transmitting values.

It is spreading messages that show the utilitarianism of individuals, extreme perfectionism, power-seeking, and vice versa, spreading messages with the content of responsibility, unity, empathy, and justice-seeking. It will lead to modelling and imitation of people and, as a result, the internalisation of these negative or positive behaviours in the audience. It is called the function of transmitting values related to violence management or the unfunction of sharing anti-values about violence. In the revolutionary movement, both the value spectrum and the anti-value distortion of radio can be observed and examined.

- The human factor is not separate from the environment, so another factor that plays a vital role in anger management is the context. Under the circumstances regarding the differences in the social class of individuals in society with conditions such as economic differences, power-seeking

and information inequality, radio in the revolutionary movement by depicting the class gap between individuals led to the perception that distributive justice is not observed in the society and the society has two classes with high and low socio-economic base. Such a perception, even if false, caused the creation and increase of violence against so-called upper-class people. This issue is named the function of creating a perception of injustice in society and promoting violence as a tool to overcome these perceptions.

- The individuals' strategy of managing violence in society refers to the design created to control, manage, and deal with the central phenomenon of violent media and manage the violence of individuals in the community. By providing a wide range of views to individuals, the radio will create components such as tact and promote consultation and discourse in individuals, referred to as the flourishing of critical rationality. Radio media has the potential to promote values based on right-oriented, realism and comprehensiveness, and skills based on compassion, empathy, optimism, courtesy, and respect as the essential criteria for controlling violence, which can be referred to as the function of sovereign aggression education. This subject is named the right-oriented aggression training and overcoming skills training on violence. Although this type of radio function in the Islamic Revolution movement may not exist in its initial stage, going through its initial stages and reaching its final stage, called the Thermidor period, is better visible. During the period when political bans were lifted, mass rallies gradually disappeared.

- If Radio identifies its unfunctions to provide mediating conditions and context for the management of community violence and applies the appropriate strategy according to the needs, we can hope that a set of identifying unfunctions and using functions to control the phenomena-oriented has led to the ultimate consequence of rationality and balance.

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