Macro-Narratives and Development in Iran: Critique and Study of Political Culture Approach

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Abstract

The present study aims to discuss a macro-narrative in the analysis of development obstacles in Iran. Political culture approach is a structural psychological approach that stresses the decisive role of culture in development and reduces the development obstacles to cultural matters. Its main suggestion is transition from tradition to modernity and its data includes psychological elements, stories and accounts. This approach was adopted by some voyagers (diarists) and diplomats to understand the third world and later some political scientists used this data to form their theories. The important question posed by this study is that why this approach adopted to study Iran and what are its implications and inefficiencies to understand the obstacles of development in this country? The findings of the study show that Macro-Narratives including political culture approach due to reductionism, essentialism, general orientation, lack of attention to the complexities of the societies and other factors are inefficient for analyzing Iran's developments. Therefore, to understand Iran, one has to bypass the macro-narratives and applies the micro ones. The research method is explanatory by using documentary studies and critique and reviewing the published works within the framework of this approach.

Keywords: Political culture, Iran, Macro-Narratives.

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1. Introduction

Various authors have tried to study Iran and the third world developments by different theoretical frameworks. In their opinion some factors affect the political life of these countries that are natural factors (climate, geographical, geopolitical, and natural resources), the history of the society, major social cleavages, ideologies and attitudes of the ruling groups, political structure, the lack of consensus among elites and anti-development political culture. They study these factors through macro theories such as Asiatic mode of production, oriental despotism, patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, feudalism, modern authoritarianism, absolute authoritarianism and Iranian authoritarianism[1]. Cultural view is one of such approaches that is based on a broad and deep theoretical literature. These macro narrative theories have been analyzing the process of development in Iran for several decades and they have been dominant approaches in Iran's universities after Islamic revolution and among bestsellers in this country[2].

Mohammadi Mehr has explored the typology of studies on political development in Iran in a variety of books that have published after the Islamic Revolution. Of the 145 books studied in this article, more than 30 percent have identified tyranny and authoritarianism, components of political culture, and the gap between traditionalism and modernity as the main cause of Iran's political underdevelopment (Mohammadi Mehr et al. 2018:104). In another table it has been shown that 19.1% of the books had emphasized on despotism and authoritarianism, 10.4% of them had identified components of political culture and 7.8% of them had mentioned the defective modernity, preventing the growth of modernization and gaps between tradition and modernity as the main causes of political underdevelopment in Iran (120-121).

This approach, with its emphasis on psychological aspects and general explanations for complex issues, has attracted particular attention in the

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1.For a detailed discussion see Homa Katouzian (Katouzian,1981) (Katouzian,2004), Halim Barakat (Barakat,1993), Mehran Kamreva (Kamrava,1992) (Kamrava,1993), Yu Dal Seung (Seung,2017), Marvin Zonis (Zonis,۱۹۷۱), Hossien Bashiriyeh (Bashiriyeh,2001), Reza Behnam (Behnam,1991), Samiah Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi (Farsoun & Mashayekhi,1992), Farhad Nomani (Nomani,1977).

2.For more information about thesis and dissertation in Iran on the subject of political culture see the website of Iranian Research Institute for Information Science and Technology (https://ganj-beta.irandoc.ac.ir/#/).

development literature and seems to have absorbed some of the third world scholars. In this article, I try to explore the application of this approach to the developments of Iran. The main question of the study addresses the reasons behind the adoption of this approach, its theories and implications and also its failure to explain Iran's development. The study's main hypothesis purports that political culture approach is a holistic, generalized, essentialist, and humiliating approach which has no regard for native ideas and provides simple explanations for complex political issues. They are macro narratives which do not include the details and instead of reaching a model based on data to explain development, use theoretical models to form or manipulate the data. The purpose of this study is to explain the weaknesses of macro narratives including political culture in analyzing the development obstacles in Iran, and the negative consequences of applying this approach which has attracted most researchers but emphasizing on it does not provide a solution to the development deadlock in Iran.

2. Methodology

Present study applies documentary research in probing the related issues. The documents used include books, articles, and other Persian and English sources related to the subject. The research includes all the resources that have adopted the political culture approach for exploring Iran's developments. The obtained data are collected, classified and analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques.

3. Theoretical Framework

After World War II, culture was considered a central key issue in functionalist anthropology analysis (Benedict,2005:42). The common argument of this group is that a certain culture has shared and distinct methods to view reality and adjust the paths of social action (Mohammadi 1992, 29). After dividing culture into political, economic and other cultures, political culture gained special importance and some social scientists used it as the main focus of their studies. For the first time, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, two American political scientists, developed political culture theory by which studied five countries and concluded that the main reason behind underdevelopment of Third World countries is related to psychological, historical and cultural issues (Almond & Verba,1963).

Almond defines political culture as a pattern of individual attitudes and orientations toward politics among members of a system. As a result, every political system involves a particular pattern of orientation to political actions. Later on, a group of authors including Lucian Pye and Powell followed this issue to a point that studies of political culture in the second half of the twentieth century gradually expanded to the extent that led to the formation of a paradigm. Pye notes that political behavior is so rooted in the native nature of a nation and it forms such a tradition that resists against economic and political forces that align everything with themselves (Pye & Verba,1985:8). In his book "comparative politics", Ronald H. Chilcote includes the political culture approach alongside systemic, structural functionalism and Marxist approaches as an important method for understanding related phenomena and the relationship between the variables (Chilcote, 2016). They divide political culture into three basic types: parochial, subject, and participatory.

This approach stresses on the structure in causality of the political, economic and social phenomenon. Before the emergence of rational choice theory as an agent-centric approach, the majority of the approaches in social science were structure-centric. The dominance of the three sociological theories, culture, personality and social psychology in the social sciences can be mentioned as an example. Durkheim, Weber and Pareto are among prominent figures in sociological theory. Mead, Benedict and Lasswell are some of the figures in culture and personality theory and finally Stoffer and Lazarsfeld are among the prominent theorists in social psychology (Almond,1990:4). The methodology in cultural approach is quantitative, analytical and deductive. As opposed to the historical approach it has an analytical framework and in addition to studying the past also investigates the present as well.

Overall, of the studies carried out on the topic of culture, three main theories related to culture and politics can be distinguished. First, culturalism theory which considers culture as the motif of all social actions including politics; Second, those which give priority to the society and consider culture as its byproduct or some of its parts such as politics and also discuss Political Sociology of Culture; Third, supporters of interaction or reciprocity that discuss Culture, politics and even other phenomena in actions and reactions to each other. Their details are as follows:

1. Culturalism and cultural determinants: The role of political culture in the formation of the state and political structures and political behavior are stressed heavily in this perspective. Culture in this perspective not only directs individual perceptions and behaviors but also determines collective behaviors. The most application of this dimension of culture is discussed in functionalism. The political culture is in the heart of the functionalist analysis of political phenomena. Basic work in this field carried out by Almond & Verba in the civil culture area. As a result, establishment and continuation of political culture from the perspective of these authors especially Talcott Parsons is solely the product of internal normative culture through the channels of primary socialization (Religion, family etc.) and in these systems, throughout history, a version of political culture has been created that is an obstacle for political development.

2. Culture as a subject of political power: In the teachings of Marx, the dominant culture is nothing but the values and beliefs of the dominant class. Today, this topic is also relevant in post-modernism which discusses power, government or political culture. In this dimension, the dominant political ideology and attitudes of ruling groups is the main obstacle to transformation of political culture that reproduces its corresponding political culture.

3. The interaction between Culture and politics: of all the people who are faithful to this approach, Talcott Parsons has the most special position, because he places culture and politics within a structural framework alongside other factors. Culture, in Parsons' view, is one of the four social subsystems which influence the political subsystem through cultural institutions and also through politicians who are themselves products of the cultural system of the society. However, the political subsystem influences the cultural subsystem through cultural policies, monitoring of cultural institutions and cultivators of culture, especially media and newspapers (Naghibzadeh,2000: 81)[1].

The dominant topic in the 50s, 60s and even 70s was the first category which viewed all political developments through the perspective of political culture and discussed government formations by political cultures. By adopting a macro narrative approach, this view reduces many factors

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1.For more information see (Rabbani and Shayegan Fard, 2011) and (Gol Mohammadi, 2007).

including historical, geographical, political and economic structures and social conditions to political culture and in an extremist view, it considers political culture as a static category which forms the character of a nation over time.

4. Research Findings
4.1. Political culture approach and the third world

The political culture approach which studies the third world in the mid-nineteenth century until the seventies produced a large body of literature and developed a special research approach in the twentieth century. Its main goal was to find a way to drive the region toward progress and westernization. This body of literature especially in the second half of the twentieth century was a prescription to develop the third world. It reduces the causes of underdevelopment in the third world to culture and as a result suffers from reductionism and determinism. This approach views the third world culture as having a subject political culture.

The literature on political culture in the third world can be found more in analytical books by sociologists, political scientists and some voyagers (diarists). In his important book "The Center of the Universe" (2004), Graham Fuller used this approach to investigate Iran's foreign policy with other countries of Persian Gulf. In the first chapter, he discusses Iran's foreign policy and attempts to find a cultural proposition for patterns of Iran's foreign policy. In this discussion, he uses statements such as mistrust, individualism, claims of leadership and ambition to explain Iranian political culture and Iran's foreign policy in the Persian Gulf and Iranians insistence on the Gulf as being Persian. Fuller explains Saudi foreign policy based on historical conservatism and analyzes most of the Persian Gulf developments on the basis of geo-culture perspective. A series of articles in 1994 were published in London as "political culture and democracy in the third world". This series which are referred to by the majority of authors regarding this approach in the Persian Gulf, discuss the impact of political culture within the framework of patrimonialism, clientalism and the rule of traditional culture (Diamond,1994). Mehran Kamrava (Kamrava 1993) has investigated the Persian Gulf countries through neo-patrimonialism systems (including new mechanisms of legitimacy such as sultanism, clientalism and

coorperatism)[1]. Halim Barakat (Barakat,1993) has used this approach generally about the Middle Eastern Arab countries.

Other books on this approach include the memories of some Western diplomats in the Persian Gulf such as "Memoirs of Lawrence of Arabia" (1990), "The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isphahani" (2011) by James Justinion Morier, "Three years in Iran (2005)" and "Three years in Asia (2004)" by Joseph Arthur Gobineau (2008). All of them have worked in the third world countries and the Persian Gulf as diplomats. They consider the dominant traditional culture as the main obstacle to development and adopt a humiliating tone towards the culture in the region. Many books about Persian Gulf countries in the west have constantly referred to these books.

One of the prominent orientalists in this field is Marvin Zonis. He has investigated this hypothesis in the Middle East in his article "conspiracy Thinking in the Middle East" in the Journal of Political Psychology (Zonis and Craig,1994). Many writers including Daniel Pipes (Pipes,1998) and Matthew Gray (Gray,2010) have described conspiracy theory as one of the important components of the Middle Eastern political culture, especially the Arab Middle East (Ghaffari Hashjin and Ghalandari 2013).

4.2. Application of the political culture approach in Iran

Due to its special charm, the cultural approach has long been used as a dominant view in the political literature on barriers to development in Iran. Although in many of such views the interactional role of politics and culture is stressed, but these works have intentionally or otherwise leaned towards the decisive role of culture. In Iran, some have investigated the political and even economic underdevelopment and with an exaggerated unilateral emphasis on the specific political culture of the country, its negative consequences and its resistance against change, have blamed it for unilateral power structure and have considered it as an important obstacle to political development. In these holistic views, geographical, geopolitical, historical and psychological issues are reduced to cultural obstacles and they propose an interpretation of culture that based on these factors lead to a certain political culture.

Today, this approach forms an extensive intellectual orientation in Iran and

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۱. For interesting analyses of historical and sociological conditions shaping political culture in the Middle East and the Arab world, see Halim Barakat (Barakat,1993).

has its own special advocates. In the literature on political culture in Iran, three general views can be extracted: the first discussions on political culture and development can find in some books which noticed the general pathology of Iranian culture. These works appear at times in the field of written literature in Iran and usually are welcomed because of their attractiveness, especially if they adopt a fictional format[1]. These works usually lack a theoretical framework but through the use of stories, proverbs and poems describe Iranian culture. In his two books, Ali Reza-Qoli names Mosaddeq's mistakes and notes that Iranian culture not only sent him into exile but also forced his name, works, scientific analysis of his works, and his criticism of – economic, social and political behavior into exile too. He later concludes that in the past centuries Iranian people have achieved nothing but failure and loss of spiritual and material wealth of this land (Reza-Qoli,1988: 226–227). Making general statements, quick generalizations, fascinating psychological aspects and lack of attention to the depth of Iranian culture are some of the characteristics of such written literature.

The second type of literatures which are more relevant to this study are more academic than the previous ones and have suggested new theoretical discussions as the basis of their approach. In his books and articles, Marvin Zonis has summarized political culture of Iran's elite as having four characteristics: political cynicism, personal mistrust, manifest insecurity, and interpersonal exploitation. According to him, these views are the basis of political behavior in Iran. A central theme pervading the book is that "the longer and more thoroughly a member of the elite participates in the Iranian political system, the more he manifests personal attitudes of insecurity, cynicism and mistrust" (Zonis,1971:15). The main hypothesis of his book, "Political Elite in Iran", is that behaviors and attitudes of powerful persons create the political changes in societies in which some political processes have not been established within the formal structures of government. In these societies, the people's psychological characteristic and their personalities are very important (Zonis,1971). Other writers in this type include Mahmood Sari-Al-Ghalam who talks about Iranian authoritarianism

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١. Some of these works which do not have a specific theoretical framework include Jamal Zadeh (Jamalzadeh 1966), Bazargan (Bazargan,1979), Ali Reza Qoli (Reza-Qoli 1988) (Reza-Qoli,1994) and Amirkhani (Amirkhani,2013).

(Sariolghalam 2008; 2011); Seung who has offered New Authoritarianism (Seung,2017); Raza Bahnam, (Behnam 1991), Hassan Qazi-Moradi (Qazi-Moradi,2000) and Mehrdad mashayekhi (Mashayekhi 2007) who talk about the continuity of instability, egocentrism of Iranians and culture of mistrust respectively. There are some other writers like Alamdari who notices secret of Iran's backwardness in the political culture (Alamdari 2000) and Kamreva (Kamrava,1993) who in his point of view despite many changes, the autocratic nature of Iranian politics has remained intact. Kamrava is not very optimistic that this phase of Iranian history is going to end anytime soon[1].

Sadeghi and Ghanbari in Mass political culture, failed states and the problem of political development in Iran (Sadeghi and Ghanbari 2017) have introduced the mass political culture as the main cause of Iran's political underdevelopment in four eras of this country (Constitutional Era, First Pahlavi, Second Pahlavi and Islamic Republic Era). Based on their opinion "one of the largest barriers in front of political and democracy development in Iran is the low level of participatory political culture (128). This article, which has heavily supported it's ideas by the above sources and has less frequently referred to main sources about those eras contends that: "At the time of the constitutional movement, the foundations of this movement were not clear to majority of intellectuals, the general public, or even the elites of the society. … There were deleterious characteristics such as mistrust, extraversion, introversionism, and violence against others in the society (131). Political culture in the 1940s was a behind the discourse of political development and democracy among intellectuals and political elites (136). Absolutism and elimination are among the components of Iranian political culture in the first period of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its political culture has been in the form of a subject-participatory political culture (147 – 148). Presidential election results in 2005, the defeat of the reformists and the lack of support for this discourse showed that the participatory political culture among the masses was still in its infancy (153).

The third type include works that have moved more towards the interaction of culture and politics. "We Iranians: A Historical & Social Contextualizing of Iranians Ethos (Farasatkhah 2016) has a better scientific approach than other works and distances itself from the determinative role of culture.

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1. Other studies include (Sharif, 2002) and (Tohid Fam, 2002).

Katouzian in "Conflict Between State and Nation (a theory for history and politics in Iran)" (Katouzian 2004), Bashiriyeh in "Obstacles to Political development in Iran" (Bashiriyeh 2001) and Bill in "Politics in The Middle East" (Bill and Springborg 1994) and "Politics in Iran" (Bill 1972) have stressed on this interactional relations. The works of Chehabi (1990), Tavakoli-Targhi (2003) and Fazeli (2006) are in this framework as well[1].

Table 1: Researches on the Relationship between Culture and Politics in Iran

Interaction Between Culture & Politics	Emphasizing the Decisive Role of Culture	Without a Specific Theoretical Framework
(Farasatkhah 2016); (Bashiriyeh 1995); (Chehabi 1990); (Rafipour 2019)	(Behnam 1991);(Mashayekhi 2007); (Seung 2017);(Sariolghalam 2008); (Sariolghalam 2011);(Sariolghalam 2018); (Sharif 2002); (Qazi-Moradi 2000); (Mohammadi 1992); (Diamond 1994); (Farsoun and Mashayekhi 1992); (Kamrava 1992); (Fuller 1998); (Seif 2000); (Zonis 1968); (Izadi 2017); (Sadeghi and Ghanbari 2017); (TohidFam 2002)	(Bazargan 1979); (Amirkhani 2013); (Jamalzadeh 1966); (Reza-Qoli 1988); (Reza-Qoli 1994); (Maurier 2011); (Gobineau 2005)

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[1]. For a detailed discussion see Houchang E Chehabi (Chehabi 1990), Homa Katouzian (Katouzian 2004), Hossien Bashiriyeh (Bashiriyeh 2001), Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi (Tavakoli-Targhi 2003). Katouzian presents the theory of autocratic government in Iran on the basis of social structure of Iran not political culture. He says "differentiation among societies is not from race and blood, however roots in their structures and systems. With the study the whole of history of Europe and Iran we cannot easily trace fewer savagery or greater humanity in Iran in comparison with that continent (Katouzian, 2004: 36).

The second type of these works that have come under criticism in this article are among best sellers in Iran. Theoretical basics in all these studies, one way or another, have pointed to the interactive role of politics and culture and the way they affect each other, but they have based their main hypothesis on the decisive role of culture and they have also adopted their theoretical framework in this way. The main concern of these books is the role of cultural barriers to political development in Iran that have organized and unified a host of information and historical data within a specific analytical framework. The main hypothesis of these studies purports that there is a strong link between the performance of any political system and its traditional values and that traditions, though not stable, are durable and lasting and even revolutions cannot get rid of them easily and quickly. As a result, research on some of the stable characteristics of political culture is of crucial importance to recognize the current processes. In an answer to his main question, Yu Dal Seung (2017) asks whether the lack of political development in the sense of participation and competition is associated with traditional Iranian culture. As an answer to this question he suggests a hypothesis that the traditional political culture as one of the major obstacles to social and political development is connected to the social - cultural system of oriental despotism and its foundation, Asian system. As a result, he discusses this question and the main hypothesis in four chapters of his book[1]. Mashayekhi believes despite profound cultural changes that have taking place in Iran since mid-nineteenth century, main components of political culture such as authoritarianism, factionalism, patriarchism and mistrust have resilient character and continued for thousands of years (Mashayekhi,2007: 546).

These works use historical data for their statements. As an example, in an investigation of historical obstacles to development, they discuss constant attacks by nomadic tribes in Iran which used to lead to chaos and they trace the history of such incidents in the country and interpret the insecurity and chaos as a political behavior in Iran which promote pessimism in the society and serve as obstacles to political development (Mashayekhi,2007:556). On

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1. The book "The Role of Political Culture in Iranian Political development" (Seung 2017) has adopted this approach and it is has extended its findings until present based on its field studies and questionnaire design and it has also presented more objective data in comparison with other books.

the other hand, in an investigation of geopolitical issues they consider Iran's special geographical position at the international crossroads (Mashayekhi,2007:551) and its location in a region of competing countries as the root causes of a culture of cynicism and distrust. In their investigations, some of these authors refer to patricide and genocides committed by Iranian and consider them as the reasons behind the separation of government and people in Iran. They also attribute Asiatic mode of production, oriental despotism and the resulting culture to geographical issues in Iran and consider water shortages as the reason behind the formation of this mode of production and the resulting culture (Mashayekhi, 2007:546; Seung, 2017:61; Behnam,1991:98). These authors deem the aforementioned transformation of political culture which they describe as hypocrisy, opportunism, mistrust, absolutism, authoritarianism, fanaticism, violence, conspiracy theories etc. as very slow and even somewhat impossible (Seung, 2017: 62–63).

In the second chapter (Seung,2017: Chapter 2) entitled "Old Culture: Absolute Authoritarianism", he refers to the Asian mode of production and the eastern autocracy derived from it in the theory of Karl Marx and Whitfogel, and the formation of a particular political culture of it. Authority-based systems, centrality of bureaucracy, political hierarchy, authority of a governmental religion, the attitudes of distrust, insecurity, and political opportunism among the elite and the masses are considered as the most important characteristics of the political culture in Eastern authoritarian governments which have also penetrated modern authoritarian governments in new ways (Seung 2017, chap. 2). In these studies, the political culture of the masses in Iran are portrayed with characteristics such as absolute obedience, submission, fear of the government, mistrust, political apathy and having slave-like attitudes and they note that anecdotal stories, proverbs and political literature are a reflection of such attitudes. Siyasatnama by Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, works of voyagers (diarists), Amsalu Hakam by Dehkhoda and religious legal sources (Zoroastrian and Shiite) are the sources referred to by these authors to extract the roots of traditional political culture of Iranians (Mashayekhi,2007:552–553; Seung, 2017:61).[1]

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[1] .Mashayekhi uses some proverbs like "This too shall pass" and "All is for the best" for showing frustration and pessimism and some catchphrases such as "Insha'Allah" and "It was not God's will" for showing fatalism among Iranians (Mashayekhi, 2007:552).

4.3. Critiques of the political culture approach

One of the main criticisms leveled at this approach is its holistic viewpoint and as a result, its simplification, quick generalization and lack of due attention to the depth and cultural complexities of societies. Then other obstacles to development are embedded within this framework. The assumptions of this view can lead the researcher to pay more attention to similarities and ignore the differences and not investigate all the variables in terms of interactions between them (Ghavam,1995 :196). The macro narratives use their assumptions in vast area of time and place. "New Authoritarianism", "Absolute Authority" and "Culture of Mistrust and Uncertainty" approaches have been used by above authors to study the history of Iran. One of this author believes the linear study of the history of Iran indicates the reality that Iranians have never had any other experiments except with diverse form of authoritarianism and just have gone under one authoritarian system to another one during their history. In fact, Iranians had not experienced a dominant method other than authoritarianism (Sariolghalam,2011:11& 89).

Another weakness of the aforementioned viewpoint is its lack of attention to cultural complexities and lack of appropriate indicators. Mehran Kamrava devotes a chapter of his book to a discussion of Iranian political culture in which he analyses the impact of tribalism, feudalism, religion, the cult of personality, illiteracy, and social and ethnic inequalities on the Iranian collective psyche (Kamrava,1992). He writes for example, "Iranian intellectuals suffer from an incurable ignorance of ways and means to understand and analyze their own society … Iran is a nation full of demagogues but few intellectuals" (Kamrava,1992:39). Kamrava's lopsided reliance on English-language sources have left it with little in the way of original data. (Boroujerdi,1994:316). If we change the abstract prism through which we view the Third World, we would be able to recognize the complexities of these societies. Such countries are not simply similar and the multitude of social gaps, a plurality and different modes of production of social groups have added to the complexities of these societies (Abrahamian,1974). In his book "strong societies and weak states", Migdal (Migdal,1988) considers the governments in these societies as weak which are entrapped in the complexities of their societies. This theory is in contrast to Witfogel's (Wittfogel,1981) oriental despotism that according to which

civil society is annihilated and this point is the theoretical foundation of many books on political sociology of the Eastern countries and Iran. In general, it appears that westerners are less sensitive to the facts of social life and the complexity and constant changes in these societies and even when some of these researchers realize these facts and complexities, they attempt to explain them based on social and political experiences of Western Europe and North America (Ghavam,1995:197).

In this view there is an essentialist attitude which considers some characteristics as stable and unchangeable. Sariolghalam says: "Iranians by their authoritarianism genes desire others accept and confirm everything they do and say" (Sariolghalam, 2008: 17). "Theoretically, something which have formed the framework of Iranian's life was a system and a logic of authoritarianism. Extent and depth of authoritarianism have been so inclusive that we may be able to trace it in the nature and behavior of Iranians in the level of genetic (Sariolghalam, 2008: 26). But culture is an ever changing and dynamic concept. Industrialization, modernization and the emergence of new media have brought about similar changes in the political culture of different countries in a way that as generations change, cultures change along with them. Most of the aforementioned views consider culture as a static concept and this is while the available evidence is not enough to justify the prediction of fundamental changes in the political culture of advanced industrial countries but the same body of evidence reminds us that our understanding of political culture has to be dynamic (Almond,1993:182). As a result, culture is not a static variable which can be replicated. Even according to today's extremist views, post modernists consider culture as a construction which goes through changes relative to the era of networked society at any time. Seung in the last paragraph of conclusion part of his book (Seung, 2017: 151–152) assumes political culture as an unstable and transformative phenomenon, but in general, the whole book moves towards the perspective of culturalists. Through this perspective, he is trying to find the instinctive guide lines for Iranians.

In this approach, a form of humiliation and as a result, some forms of racism based on western values and humiliation of the east can be detected. Tavakoli-Targhi believes there is a type of elimination of history in this approach that its manifestation is imagination of backwardness of Iran and

progression of the west. This unilinear approach that with a lesser degree regards Iran's historical developments, considers contemporary Europe as modern and its contemporary Iran as pre-modern. Then, the history of Iran has been the history of shortages that in comparison with Europe led to its underdevelopment (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2003:8).

The authors of this approach first praise the people under their study but then criticize them in the harshest ways. Graham Fuller (Fuller,1998) in the introduction of "Center of the universe" appreciate Iranian nation and its culture but in the following chapters emphasizes on elements that represent indecent culture of Iranians in foreign policy. "Iranians have not had any other experiments except repression, production of fear, killing and elimination of opponents" (Sariolghalam, 2008: 60).

In this kind of literature political culture is usually considered as an subjective concept and the researchers go on to form theories without any consideration for existing facts. Many of their experimental data cannot be tested easily either. As a result, they reduce varied and numerous resources and sources of ideology and unilateral public power to political culture. "By Culture of mistrust we understand a historically formed set of values, norms, symbols, beliefs, and discourses, organized around a dichotomous view of the world which is transmitted from a generation to another one. This cultural orientation is the common point in the Middle East and less-developed societies" (Mashayekhi, 2007:551).

Another characteristic of this approach is determinism. It stresses the decisive role of determinism in the variable of culture and ignores other variables. According to this approach, any nation which desires progress and development has no other choice but to follow the direction of the West and it spares no doubt in proposing the West or being part of it as a positive political point. It views culture as a fate. In a criticism of this view, Fareed Zakaria notes that this argument is very common today and many individuals from business consultants to military strategists discuss culture as if it was a simple explanation for complicated issues. Why the US economy experienced such considerable boom over the past two decades? It is clear: because of the unique entrepreneurial culture. Why Russia cannot reconcile itself with capitalism? It is just as clear: because of its feudal and anti-market culture. Why the Arab world produces terrorism? Again, the answer is because of its culture (Zakaria, 2006:55–56). These answers are

too simplistic. A single country can succeed at different times, sometimes within a few decades and then fails which shows that other factors other than culture which is relatively stable are also at play. In his studies, Weber attributed Northern Europe's economic success to the Protestant ethics and predicted that the Catholic south will remain poor. However, in fact Italy and France have experienced faster growth than Protestant Europe during the past half century (Zakaria, 2006:58–59).

4.4. Consequences of the application of political culture approach

The consequences of the approach include a kind of low self-esteem among the elite in the third world and racism among the researchers in this field of study. However, this can lead to an escalation of the conflict between tradition and modernity in Iran and this gap can prohibit development. Since some form of essentialism can be detected in this approach, the Persian Gulf, the third world and Iran are other selves which are to be guided and directed by the West. This approach has somehow served as an obstacle to development in Iran because it does not provide an appropriate prescription for exiting the circuit of underdevelopment. Determinism and reductionism in this approach has caused other hurdles to development to be ignored. Also, its deductive method led most of the researchers in this field of study to conduct their studies without any objective data. The reason is that culture is a simple explanation for complicated issues. It was within the framework of this culture that these countries were granted the permission to have independence. However, the elites took control of political structure and prescribed instructions on the direction of development whose result was nothing but underdevelopment or revolutions.

Stressing the decisive role of political culture has also overshadowed one of the major obstacles to political development in Third World societies which is the political Structure. Today, hardening of the political structure is very clear in Third World countries. Of course, changing the political culture is naturally possible but while public political culture may have gone through significant developments, attitude and ideology of the ruling group remain unfavorable for political development. Without any developments in the ideology of the ruling group particularly towards political participation, increased participation can lead to breakdown and disruption in societies. While in Western countries, the impact of culture on the structure of power

has been exaggerated, the reinforcing effect of the relationship of power structure on the political culture as an obstacle to development has been generally ignored (Bashiriyeh,1995:34).

Overall, these studies recognize the impact of human ecology on the behavior and characteristics of the third world and Iran to the extent that according to their research findings, people are falling into the abyss of immorality. However, as opposed to their assessments, many positive characteristics such as integrity, honesty and popular movements etc. can also be found among Iranians. Iran's cultural richness is full of these traits, and if they had tolerance for the alien nation it would have been for the preservation of their culture and customs and ultimately the cultural conquest of the alien nation. Interestingly, many of bad traits (mistrust, misbehavior, etc.) that are attributed to the Iranian people have been attributes and characteristics of aggressive tribal groups, and since history is the story of the behaviors of rulers but not people, the behavior of the occupying rulers is ascribed to the people of this land. Iranians not only preserved their culture but also tried to preserve their land and independence.

The versatility of Iranian culture and borrowing positive elements from other cultures are some other positive aspects of this country's culture. Iranians have always been pioneers among the Eastern nations in adopting positive aspects of the Western culture and as a result immoral fundamentalism never took off in this country and religious jurisprudence and the criterion of rationality helped this nation to stay far from narrow-minded restrictions.

 Adopting such an approach and looking at Iranian culture through its prism are contrary to democratic processes and advancing process of democratic development in a country. If we consider culture and unfavorable cultural features as stable and constant, so the desire for a democratic society should be considered as a far-fetched dream which can remain inaccessible for a long time to come. On the other hand, this view can lead a generation towards identity crisis and destruction of the past. It is right that we should deal with weaknesses of a society from the perspective of pathology and attempt to enhance the culture; however, we should not go so far as to have the current generation in Iran sever ties with its past and view it with doubt. As a result, these characteristics should not be considered as Iranians'

nature. Tobacco movement, the Constitutional Revolution, the oil nationalization movement, the Islamic Revolution and the resisting against Iraq war are shining examples of Iranian's popular movements.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigates one of the macro-narratives that has frequently used in the analysis of political development in Iran which its main hypothesis is that cultural elements are the main obstacles to development in this country and the durable nature of culture resists any change. The suggested solution is then transition from tradition to modernity and its data includes psychological elements and stories. Its focus is also on the whole history. Its methodology is deductive with the aim of generalization and reducing all the obstacles to culture. This macro-narrative is within the framework of elitism and its agents to change the situation are elites who insist to describe their people as unintelligent, condemned to follow the Western ways of development. So, orders must constantly impose on the society from the top to the bottom. As a result, theoretical frameworks such as Asiatic Mode of Production, oriental despotism and modern authoritarianism reemerged. Its application in the third world is among researchers and Western diplomats and in Iran among pre-constitutional intellectuals, cultural policies of Reza Shah and Western and Iranian academic authors like Marvin Zonis, Mahmood Sariolghalam, Hassan Qazi- Moradi, Yu Dal Seung and historians and diplomats such as Graham Fuller, James Justinian Morier and Lawrence of Arabia. This approach has also become the subject of many academic dissertations.

The reason behind the emergence of this narrative was proposing solutions for development of the third world and Iran. With a historical approach and prevalent understandings of the region, the West aimed to assist the region towards development through transition from tradition to modernity. So, its first version was a change in the culture of the area. They first engaged in humiliation of the region's culture and targeted its symbols. With essentialism embedded in this narrative, it promoted some form of racism. Its macro-oriented approach also justified the development obstacles through the proposed suggestions. As a result, development of Iran and the third world was studied based on this framework for almost half a century and its main consequence was Iran's underdevelopment and a revolution

cuased by humiliating traditional classes and cultural values. Another consequence was the loss of native political, economic and social institutions and the related groups in Iran. These institutions were either taken over by the government or were eliminated due to reliance on the past. Markets, religious bodies, Mostofians, Iranian bureaucrats, Fetyāns, Lutis, guilds etc. as genuine communities of Iranian society in solving the problems of society and its productions without the need for government were also eliminated, taken over by the government or deviated from their path.

Macro-oriented approaches and theories based on them have long adopted the third world and the Iranian society as the subject of their studies and analysis and also suggested some solutions. They sometimes provide analysis of Iran that have added to our understanding of Iranian society but they do not account for the complexities in the region and on the contrary they have misguided the society by suggesting wrong solutions. They do not notice the details or divide them into other pieces. Most importantly, these theories are not based on the essence of Iran's society or at least they have not used any genuine sources for their analyses. In addition, such arguments are not based on objective data either. As a result, such macro-narratives are required to make the transition to micro-narratives for the analysis of political development in Iran. While in micro-narratives, analysis might be divided into separate parts but putting these parts together could lead to a convergence that provides a better narrative based on objective data.

Table 2: Critique of Political Culture Approach

Main Features of Political Culture Approach	Categorized as a Macro-Narrative in Political Science Including Psychological, Cognitive, Functional-Systematic and Tribal approaches Using Quantitative, Analytical and Deductive Methodology Regarding Culture as an Independent Variable Considering Culture as the Main Obstacle to Development Applying Culture as a Static Concept Stressing on the Structures in causality of the Political, Economic and Social Phenomenon Its Main Suggestion is Transition from Tradition to Modernity Considering Political Culture as a Static Category Which Forms the Character of a Nation Over Time
Key Theorists and their main viewpoints	**Zonis**: conspiracy Thinking in the Middle East & political cynicism **Sari-Al-Ghalam**: Iranian authoritarianism **Seung**: New Authoritarianism **Mashayekhi**: Culture of Mistrust and Uncertainty **Kamrava**: The Autocratic nature of Iranian politics **Sadeghi & Ghanbari**: The Mass Political Culture

	Qazi-Moradi: Egocentrism of Iranians *(DarPeeramoon-e Khodmadari-e Iranians)*. **Fuller**: Claims of Leadership and Ambition **Behnam**: The Continuity of Instability, Egocentrism of Iranians and Culture of Mistrust
The intention and Cause of its application about Iran	Studying Development Obstacles of Iran Finding a Way to Drive Iran Toward Progress Presenting exclusive approaches about development barriers in Iran High attractiveness among the scientific elite An appealing approach for voyagers and diplomats to present their views about Iran
Weak Points	Simple explanations for complex political issues; Determinism; Reductionism; Holistic Viewpoints, General orientations & making general statements; Essentialism; Lack of attention to the complexities of the societies; Humiliation and Racism; Simplistic generalizations; Lack of appropriate objective data & ignoring Original References; Linear approach; Considering Culture as a fate; Offering no other choices but following the direction of the West
Negative Consequences of Applying this Approach	No solutions to the development deadlock in Iran More attention to similarities and ignore the differences between Cultures No attention to other hurdles in front of development Ignoring native political, economic and social institutions and the related groups in Iran An Escalation of the Conflict Between Tradition & Modernity Identity Crisis & Destruction of the Past Considering Contemporary Europe as Modern and its Contemporary Iran as Pre-Modern

6.Acknowledgements

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