A Critical Review of the Iranian Attempts towards the Development of Alternative Sociologies

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Abstract: In recent years, social sciences have been ,formally, accused of being secular, western, with non-religious epistemological foundations, being indifferent to social issues and practical needs of the Iranian society and on the other hand, -there are formal attempts to establish an indigenous social science in contrast with universal social sciences. Such indigenization attempts in the realm of sociology have mainly resulted in two programs: The Islamic sociology program and the social and cultural engineering program. Although having the support of some of the academics as well, the bulk of advocates of the two approaches in indigenization program respectively are among specific religious institutions and figures and the governmental ones.

This paper specifically aims to analyze the cognitive responses of the Iranian social scientists to these two approaches. Various tendencies have emerged among the Iranian intellectuals as a reaction to these official plans.

In terms of the conceptual framework, this paper draws on the concepts of 'alternative discourses' of Syed Farid Alatas, Reawyn Connell's 'Southern theory', and the four concepts of professional, critical, policy and public sociologies of Michael Burawoy and the questions raised by the paper can be considered in the light of these concepts: Do the Iranian post-revolutionary sociologists' thoughts show the characteristics of alternative discourses? Do these discourses attend to social sciences as a program of democratization of the 'north' 'south' relations? Do the social sciences discourses in Iran contemplate on the promotion of democracy on the national level? Do these discourses have the required theoretical characteristics to be acceptable within the discipline? Which of the four patterns of sociology mentioned above are reflected in these alternative discourses?

The present paper firstly reviews the pre-revolutionary intellectual tradition of alternative social sciences by discussing Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969) and Ali Shariati's (1933-1977) thoughts and then the post-revolutionary intellectual rupture and the emergence of phobia/taboo on the discussion of indigenization will be described. The main part of the paper will attend to the alternative social sciences among Iranian social scientists in three sections. In nowadays Iran there can be the talk of various global, indigenous, and alternative sociologies.The indigenous social sciences criticize the pre-suppositions in the ontological and epistemological foundations of the mainstream sociology in the universities. However, as long as this view has roots in official and unscientific institutions they can only be called 'pseudo critical sociology'.The trend of thought which has its roots in governmental interferences rather than academic research programs can be called 'pseudo-policy sociology'. The reaction of these academics in terms of indigenization program of social sciences has been described as a phobia where they are scared of these debates and try to avoid it like a taboo subject. Against such conditions, most of the academics have sought shelter in the universal social sciences and defend it as neutral and objective science. This can be described as the passive consumption of social sciences which is obsessed with the concerns of methodology and has not yet shown much creativity.

Several approaches are being developed in against both one-sided universalism and indigenous trends. The Iranian alternative discourses are trying to distance themselves from the paralysis brought about by the phobic situation. The advocates of "simple alternative discourses" while criticizing the official indigenization program, propose a discourse which functions as a substitute and yet defines itself in agreement with the global discourse of sociology. The "dual alternative discourses" avoid the dilemma of indigenous and universal science. They criticize the political and ideological dimensions of both discourses simultaneously and at the same time try not to ignore the democratic and humanist capabilities of attending to indigenous and universal dimensions. This trend of thought call for a formation of an interactive and dialogical world in social sciences and produce thoughts which can reconstruct social sciences as a democratic project both within various local groups and between Iran and the world powers. Perhaps the most creative intellectual trend in Iranian sociology can be traced in the advocates of such dual alternative discourses which have resulted in an expansion of critical and public kinds of sociology in addition to its professional impact.

The last section of the paper summarizes these various perspectives and evaluates them against the conceptual framework of our study. The goal of the last section is to evaluate the 'alternativity' of these discourses, their functions in democratization of both local and global relations and their shares in promotion of the four mentioned sociologies to higher levels of theoretical capabilities, value legitimation and social influence.

Keywords: indigenization; indigenous social science; Iranian Social science; Islamic sociology; simple alternative social science; dual alternative social science; local and global social science

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Introduction and Conceptual Framework

In recent years, following the ideas introduced by the 'cultural revolution' of early years of the Islamic revolution in Iran, some religious and governmental institutions and personalities –especially with the so-called revolutionary radical tendencies- on one hand, accuse social sciences of being secular, western, with non-religious epistemological foundations, being indifferent to social issues and practical needs of the Iranian society and on the other hand, -and mostly from outside the scientific communities- attempt to establish an indigenous social science in contrast with western/ universal social sciences. Such indigenization attempts in the realm of sociology have mainly resulted in the following programs:

1-   The Islamic sociology program with philosophical and textualist tendencies. The first tendency tries to change ontological and anthropological presuppositions of sociology and reform the epistemological foundations of it. The textualist tendency takes sociology as a try-and-error tool and tries to introduce the religious texts and Hadis[1] on social affairs as research hypotheses and by attending to empirical tests attempts to come up with scientific judgments on social issues based on religious texts. This approach unwillingly falls into the trap of methodological positivism which in turn, entails the acceptance of many epistemological, ideological and anthropological presuppositions of the empirical sociology.

2-   The social and cultural engineering program which has been suggested by the state and governmental institutions with the aim of using theoretical, methodological content of sociology towards Islamization of society and changing values and attitudes systems. This program tries to apply the existing sociology in Islamization of the society.

Although having the support of some of the academics as well, the bulk of advocates of the two mentioned approaches in indigenization program respectively are among specific religious institutions and figures and the governmental ones. The analysis of the two official approaches of indigenization in Iran can be the subject of an independent paper but this paper specifically aims to analyze the cognitive responses of the Iranian social scientists to these two approaches. Various tendencies have emerged among the Iranian intellectuals as a reaction to these official plans. There has been a tradition of thinking of alternative social sciences among the Iranian intellectuals in years before the revolution. We should now see if this independent tradition has suffered from an intellectual rupture at the present situation or they are able to suggest new thoughts in terms of the concept of indigenization. Under the present situation of common approaches the formulation of the issues of social sciences is in a way that leaves people with the dilemma of choosing between the global or local and the aim of this paper is to show how Iranian academics make choices between these local and global levels within the present difficult conditions.

In terms of the conceptual framework, this paper draws on the concepts of 'alternative discourses' of Syed Farid Alatas (2006), Reawyn Connell's 'Southern theory' (2007), and the four concepts of professional, critical, policy and public sociologies of Michael Burawoy (2005) and the questions raised by the paper can be considered in the light of these concepts. Do the Iranian post-revolutionary sociologists' thoughts show the characteristics of alternative discourses? Do these discourses attend to social sciences as a program of democratization of the 'north' 'south' relations? Do the social sciences discourses in Iran contemplate on the promotion of democracy on the national level? Do these discourses have the required theoretical characteristics to be acceptable within the discipline? Which of the four patterns of sociology mentioned above are reflected in these alternative discourses?

In order to answer these questions, the paper analyzes the ideas put forward in the past three conferences of Iranian Sociological Association in 2006, 2007, and 2008. In the first conference which was held under the title of 'analyzing the problems of Iranian social sciences' there was a panel called 'the challenges of production and application of sociological theories in Iran' which comprised of 8 well-known Iranian professors of sociology. The second conference entitled as 'universal or indigenous science: possibility or impossiblity' was held in the commemoration of professor Syed Hussein Alatas with 20 presentations. In the third conference entitled as

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[1] Hadis refers to reported words of prophet Mohammad and the Shiites Imams.

'conceptual and theoretical reflections upon the Iranian society', 30 prominent social scientists of the country attended to the issues of Iranian society with a theoretical approach. However, the present paper will only report and discuss the ideas put forward by the presenters who have reacted to the official indigenization programs and have proposed alternative programs for indigenization, institutionalization and alternation of social sciences in Iran. As such, this paper is a critical engagement with the ideas of about 15 social sciences thinkers in a way that each one can be considered as an ideal example of that specific mode of thinking. These people are the most prominent representative of the presented thoughts and in some cases are the exclusive members of that trend of thought. Our critical interpretive approach will on one hand, describe the existing perspectives ethnographically, and on the other hand, interprets their relations with the general atmosphere of the society -particularly the political and cultural contexts- and in some cases criticizes these relations.

The present paper firstly reviews the pre-revolutionary intellectual tradition of alternative social sciences by discussing Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969) and Ali Shariati's (1933-1977) thoughts and then the post-revolutionary intellectual rupture and the emergence of phobia/taboo on the discussion of indigenization will be described. The main part of the paper will attend to the alternative social sciences among Iranian social scientists in three sections. The figures mentioned are mainly well-known professors in Iranian universities who –as independent actors and active members of the Iranian sociological associations- try to suggest some independent programs for development of social sciences which would distinguish itself from the official/mainstream social sciences in both local and universal levels. The last section of the paper summarizes these various perspectives and evaluates them against the conceptual framework of Alatas about alternative social sciences, Connell's in terms of sociology as a democratic program and typology of Burawoy in terms of four types of sociology. The goal of the last section is to evaluate the 'alternativity' of these discourses, their functions in democratization of both local and global relations and their shares in promotion of the four mentioned sociologies to higher levels of theoretical capabilities, value legitimation and social influence.

Double-sided Cultural Criticism among Pre-revolutionary Intellectuals

The social theory of Al-e Ahmad and Shariati simultaneously criticizes Westernism and Traditionalism as both suffering from uncreatvity, and being merely imitational. Shariati in his book 'Returning to Self' criticizes both 'the infatuated modernists and the retarded traditionalists' and calls them two sides of the same coin of immitation. He considers the 'assimilated' intellectuals as counterfeit intellectuals who follow the European fashionable trends blindly similar to ordinary laymen who follow the traditional procedures ignorantly. As far as Shariati is concerned, neither of these two groups 'think' and merely follow the trends in a passive and uncreative manner. Against the passive imitation of the West, Shariati would not advocate a blind and passive imitation of traditions. This double-sided cultural criticism distinguishes Shariati's intellectual position in terms of Westernism and Nativism. Shariati would explain his complicated intellectualism in terms of a 'third way' and calls himself a 'homeless intellectual'. Against the two existing intellectual poles in which there is no difficulty and anxiety of choice, he encourages his friends to choose the stressful and risky option of those 'homeless intellectuals who are neither satisfied with the legacy of the fathers nor are they happy with the souvenir of the neighbor'. These intellectuals can neither accept the inherited moulds of their fathers and remain in those regressive frames –as they are enlightened people- nor can they become a mere consumer of the intellectual packages imported from the West –as they prefer to think organically. Shariati argues that 'in the existing powerful bi-polar intellectual context, the third way intellectuals like me, will constantly be misunderstood and their message will not be comprehended correctly'[1].

Shariati takes the current pattern of modernization as acceptance of 'a cultural uni-polarity'. This mono-culturalism puts the West in an advantageous position in terms of cultural and commodity productions, and pushes the other societies to an uncreative, consumerist position. On the basis of such cultural uni-polarity 'the civilization takes only one form which is the one made by and exported from the West and any one striving to become 'civilized' need to become the consumer as such. Culture has one form and that is the one coming from the West and in the 20th century anyone who would like to be cultured need to buy Western culture similar to buying other Western products etc. otherwise S/he lacks culture and civilization, that is, s/he is savage' (2007:

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[1] Please see Ghaneirad (1381), chapter 6, specifically pages 190-213 on Shariati and his views on civilization, modernism and multiculturalism.

24-25). 'Mono-culturalism' is to dismiss 'all the other cultures of the world which are in turn the results of thousands of years of various human geniuses and experiences and have created various forms of arts, tastes, esthetics, and great intellectualities and great and great cultural spiritualities'.

Shariati defends the idea of 'originalism'[1] against the mono-culturalism and degradation of other cultures which came along with 'globalization of machinery'. He argues that 'originalism –as intellectual, cultural and artistic diversity- is among the characteristics of pre-machinery era. In a pre-machinery era, a world tourist would encounter a unique human, culture, art, taste, estheticism, religious insight, urbanization and science, technology and etc. when entering a new place. However, machine produces a surplus of products which needs to be exported and hence all humans become consumers of certain products and conform into similar moulds of tastes. The growth of machinery destroys the diversity in human creation and the development all of a sudden. Mono-culturalism demolishes this diversity and forces the differences into a single frame. In the era of modernity originalism that is, 'the freedom of diversity of development', and 'diversity of experiences' are denied as the modern man is deprived of his/her differences and his/her diverse identities.

Shariati believes that civilization and modernization have followed one another in the West. However, there should be a distinction between the two in the Eastern countries. To him civilization means a change in the way of thinking but modernization is to mean a change in a pattern of consumption. Thus, Eastern countries can easily realize modernization but the realization of civilization –in terms of cultural and intellectual development- is a difficult process. The civilization strategy results in creativity and production which will manifest itself in cultural products and intellectual creativity before realizing production of goods. The civilization strategy goes through a kind of 'returning to self', a return to oneself which Shariati believes to be necessary in the development of mankind in general and contributing to development of a human civilization. This strategy, which makes it possible for the East to share in creation of a multicultural world civilization, is a new 'originalism' and classism. To Shariati, such classism –paying attention to tradition- is a double-sided phenomenon which can become a force of development or degradation of a nation: 'if we adhere to classism as a sacred factor and stick to its form, we have frozen ourselves into the past, but if we know and understand classism and change it, it can become a mobilizing force in a nation and provides the nation with a character'.

The post-revolutionary intellectual rupture and phobia of Nativism

Advocating and promoting the 'Islamic sociology' and 'social engineering' projects by formal religious and governmental institutions has changed the cultural and political atmosphere against the social scientists in the post-revolutionary Iran and has forced them into an unequal conditions. The change in the situation of academics and intellectuals- directly or indirectly- resulted in a rupture from Shariati and Al-Ahmad tradition and the new requirement of action and contemplation brought about different cultural and political consequences which also entailed new epistemological implications in terms of what can be considered 'good social sciences'.

The revolution has, in a sense, been the victory of the pole of tradition and religious advocates against the supporters of Westernization. In terms of Shariati's views, it seemed there has merely been a shift of power from one pole to another. Therefore, in such a context, Shariati's project for establishing a creative culture which has ambivalent links with both tradition and the West, remains an unfinished project.

Traditionalists who could not afford to ignore Shariati's thoughts and works in the revolutionary process would only draw on his words on criticism of the West and would deal with his ideas in a one-sided, selective and opportunistic way. The revolution and the traditionalist campaign to create a religious monologism in the society helped create a one-sided representation of Shariati's thoughts on the basis of which Shariati was reduced to an intellectual who was to turn tradition into an ideology, who was a fierce anti-western ideologue and was an advocate of a totalitarian traditionalism. The concept of 'returning to self' for participating in the multi-cultural world was turned into crude Nativism while the islamization of sciences, university and the public culture made it to the top agenda of 'cultural revolution' shortly after the revolution. In such a context, the main bulk of intellectuals considered defending indigenization project as the reinforcement of the monologue of the dominant power and in return, became defensive of science and university, hence a dichotomization of ideology as a false knowledge and science as objective thinking emerged. Some intellectuals mixed their criticism of government

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[1] See Shariati 1982a: 596-599 & 1982 b: 336-337on "originalism".

practices and the 'cultural revolution' process with attacking pragmatic and ideological ideas of Shariati and gradually Shariati was marginalized in intellectual debates of the country.

Once more, in such a context the global mainstream social sciences gained momentum among Iranian intellectuals but this time they enjoyed more legitimation while –unlike the years before revolution- there was less skepticism about their applicability and relevance. The ideas of Shariati and Al-Ahmad were thought to belong to the 'childhood' of the Iranian intellectualism and were gradually ignored. Translation and publication of mainstream texts of social sciences became more popular and Iranian students familiarized themselves with the latest sociological and philosophical thoughts in the world while they knew a little about the history of socio-political thoughts of the country in the past century. The intellectual atmosphere of the country was pulled between two poles: there was on one side, the ardent and bias support of traditionalism, and on the other side, there was the support of Western social sciences as unbiased and objective knowledge. In such a bipolar situation, once again, the 'fathers' legacy' and the 'souvenir of the neighbor' stood in contrast to each other and the two forms of imitation became the order of the day –again.

Maghsoud Farasatkhah[1] (2007) describes the current way of Iranian intellectuals dealing with the concept of indigenization as a kind of taboo and phobia. In his description, along with the Islamic revolution, the pre-revolutionary academic theorization turns into political and religious ideologies and surprisingly enough the backlash of such political/religious ideologies hit the academia before all.[2]

Along with the 'cultural revolution' many discourses on religious sciences and Islamic university were reproduced. Farasatkhah, to some extent blames the poverty of academic conceptualization and theorization and the risks involved in defining science in terms of isolated and naïve native tradition. As such concepts and discourses on indigenous knowledge within a specific socio-political contexts was oriented to ways which were different from that of its original advocates and due to such deviance they became entangled with political projects and the currents of Islamization of science. Such project would make science and university inefficient with its implicit and explicit religious and ideological shackles and hence it carried a high price. In effect by reacting to these consequences, gradually any discussion on indigenous knowledge in academic and intellectual atmospheres was tabooed and turned into a pseudo-modern, pseudo-positive phobia. One of the characteristics of such atmosphere is the closure to new debates on contextualization of knowledge, and against the positivist approaches.

Nematallah Fazeli[3] (2007) also reports on the existence of the phobia and the taboo of the discussion of indigenous knowledge among some academics. To him the idea of indigenization and Islamization is a kind of political and ideological tendency and in a way a bureaucratic plan which is more rooted in government political discourses than arising from academic inner discourses. Indigenization as a form of policy has caused the discussion to move away from intellectual civil discourse and to be understood as a form of official governmental and bureaucratic discussion and hence, independent critical debates on the subject became more difficult. According to Fazeli's report 'some critics of the discourse of indigenization would even consider the mere engaging in the discussion on the subject as a tool to promote and expand this discourse and as such they would regard participation in this debate as a way of legitimizing the indigenization project. In such a context, considering the implicit political orientations in this discourse, the critics of indigenization are not only unwilling to participate in the debate to reach a solution on the subject but would also avoid criticizing the indigenization discourse as they believe that even the criticism per se. is to provide support for the 'enemy' in a sense."

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[1] Farasatkhah is a member of academic staff at The Research and Planning Institute in Higher Education and an active member of the Sociology of Science and Knowledge group in Iranian Sociological Association and carry the reputation as a religious intellectual. Khalili is a researcher at Cultural and Social Studies Research Centre and a member of the Sociology of Science and Knowledge group in Iranian Sociological Association.

[2] Although Farasatkhah describes these two stages correctly, we believe that his description of the first phase of native knowledge project as academic theorization –hence devoid of political dimensions- is somehow under question. In his view the first phase originated from epistemological/sociological thoughts about science, university and development and its aim was adaptation of education, and academic research to contexts and issues of Iranian culture and society and which came to existence as of the late stages of the Pahlavis and was in contrast to project of 'top-down governmental modernization and Westernization'. Such a plan was nurtured by three approaches of 1-Nativism in social sciences and development, 2- Traditionalism, and 3- Postmodernism with works of Ehsan Naraghi, Syed Housin Nasr, and Reza Davari respectively. In contrast to epistemological representation of Farasatkhah about the concept of native knowledge before the revolution, in those years, even if we exclude people like Jalal Al-Ahmad, and Ali Shariati, the native knowledge concept has had political implications and people like Naraghi, Nasr and Davari each has been dealing with such implications in one way or another. Naraghi was pursuing a form of social engineering along with criticising technocratism and Davari even within the recent years has been known as one side of debates on epistemological views with overt political implications e.g. in the debate between Abdolkarim Soroush and Davari.

[3] Fazeli teaches anthropology and cultural studies at Allameh Tabatabai University.

Taghi AzadArmaki[1] (2007) similarly describes indigenization as a political and ideological phenomenon which, as an unscientific and anti-Western project, is essentially based on pure traditionalism rooted in the cultural and political atmosphere of intellectualism of the third world countries during the second half of the 20th century. In that period the concepts like returning to one's own identity and cultural self were formed as part of a political/ideological anti-science and anti-west discourse in the 'third world' countries. The post-revolutionary indigenization is also more connected to existing tendencies in political power to confront the West and to purely rely on tradition. The advocates of indigenization were not based in social sciences and are incapable of introducing new paradigms in social sciences and as such the outcome of their work would not contribute in reinforcing social sciences. In AzadArmaki's encapsulation, factors like, social sciences having an 'imported' nature in Iran and its lack of links with local cultural values, social needs and political systems turned into legitimizing excuses for anti-science advocates to introduce the indigenous social sciences as a solution to all problems. The agent of indigenization is the government and political system rather than the cultural middle class and academia who in turn, are counted as the agents of Westoxication themselves. The advocates of indigenization see academia as the source of Westoxication therefore they concentrate their struggles to reform this culture, on education and research fields.

Some of the above descriptions about the indigenization are interwoven with judgments which are understandable by considering the context of academia in the post-revolutionary conditions. In these judgments the supporters of indigenization in social sciences are against the promotion and expansion of science in the society and on the other hand are introducing indigenization due to political requirements hence they lack epistemological and methodological rigor. AzadArmaki's description would classify the advocates of indigenization outside the social sciences categorically whereas there are currently some academics in social sciences in Iran who defend this trend of thought. In his judgment indigenization is an out-dated project which is not compatible with the new political/cultural atmosphere of the world. Such judgment is seen quite often among academics who have the history of somewhat defending it. Another example of such judgments: indigenization as an obsolete phenomenon can be seen in Gholam Abbas Tavasoli[2] (2007) who used to defend a specific interpretation of indigenization in the past due to his intellectual closeness with Shariati.

Reflectivity and the formation of alternative discourses in the difficult conditions

The new generation of Iranian social scientists avoids the indigenization project which has religious, ideological, governmental, and bureaucratic roots. This avoidance brings about various trends. Many academics principally reject the arguments of indigenization supporters and put emphasis on following the universal general trends in social sciences. Defending the position of universal trends in social sciences, without paying attention to the requirements of indigenization seems to have become the 'duty' of some of these people. Some others accept part of the arguments in terms of the necessity of indigenization of social sciences and are divided into two groups. Some argue that the social sciences will automatically adapt and conform to Iranian social context in its process of institutionalization so there is no need for an indigenization project. Whereas, the second group would introduce an alternative solution for endogenous social sciences right from the start. These alternative discourses can further be divided into 'simple' and 'dual'. Simple alternative discourses suggest their own indigenization program against the internal official program and do not ardently bother to distinguish themselves from the universal trends but the dual alternative discourses both distance themselves from the cultural and political consequences of the official program and at the same time emphasize their distinction from the mainstream world social sciences.

In this complicated situation some overtly and some others covertly have encountered the question of how can the position of the universal social sciences be defended against the crude indigenization and how can we stand against naïve globalization in social sciences and establish links between the texts of social sciences and the Iranian life contexts in a creative and relevant way. In these conditions some Iranian sociologists think about a dual alternative discourse which is different from the mainstream world social sciences at one end and

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[1] Azadarmaki is a professor of sociology at Tehran University where he formerly served as the dean of the social sciences faculty. He is also the president of Iranian Association for Culture and Communication.
[2] Tavasoli is an emeritus and distinguished professor of sociology at Tehran University and the former president of Iranian Sociological Association. He is also a socio-political activist and has acted as the spokesman of the Iranian Freedom Movement. Mehdi Bazargan, the first post-revolutionary Prime Minster of Iran was the founder of the Iranian Freedom Movement.

distinguishes itself from the country's official indigenization discourse at the other end. The paradoxical feature of this dual alternative discourse is its on-going attempts to reach a unique approach to bring together the global and local discourses. One of the issues here is how to proceed in terms of interactive learning processes so that social sciences –without becoming colonized by the religion and government- can get into dialogue with these influential institutions. This interactive learning approach is a method of democratization of social sciences by social scientists and at the same time teaches the requirement of democratic behavior and thinking to actors in both institutions of religion and government.

The reason why the new generation of social scientists seeks different narration of indigenization in terms of internal development of social sciences is because they have faced two categories of inequalities simultaneously. At one end the existing world inequalities and the dependence of southern social sciences on world powers of social sciences and at the other end the cultural and political inequalities originated from the revolutionary atmosphere of inside Iran. As such this group faces a dual problem of lack of democracy in social sciences on the global and local scales. Not only they think that the universal social sciences, has marginalized the Iranian social knowledge but they also face a situation where the indigenization program held by the two unscientific institutions of religion and government aims to marginalize them in terms of the production and application of social knowledge. These social scientists find themselves underdog 'southern/subaltern' elites rather than 'influential elites' in their own countries. The influence and power of traditionalist elites in major parts of public culture and people, has put the social scientists in an unequal position in terms of their cultural penetration. In such conditions the academics willingly or unwillingly are involved in intellectual challenge to establish or increase their cultural impact. The attempts of academics to increase their cultural impact -through penetrating the public sphere in order to reproduce more cultural power- have contributed in formation of a kind of public sociology.

Another characteristic of this post-revolutionary situation is the university challenging the government to increase its policy impact. Social scientists do not enjoy a proportional participation in the study and development of socio-political policies. In this condition, while the government would like to use these forces in its social engineering programs, some of these social scientists produce and distribute social knowledge in order to reinforce the foundations of social/civil movements. As such, a type of policy sociology is gradually forming among this group of social scientists which attempts to solve social problems on a more democratic and broader scale.

Reflection on professional and critical sociologies

Indigenization for yesterday and tomorrow but not for today: Tavasoli (2006, 2007), a friend and like-minded of Ali Shariati and Syed Hussein Alatas who, for years, shared their views on the necessity of an independent social sciences based on indigenous context[1], is now talking in a contradictory manner about the indigenization program in social sciences. He believes that the thoughts of past generation of Muslim intellectuals in terms of criticizing the Westernism, captive mind and cultural alienation are the result of an internal weakness, a reaction to technological advancement of the West and an inefficiency of traditional cultural system and political dependence of these countries. In his view, these trends of thoughts have often tended to become extremist due to misunderstandings and reactionary behaviors and have brought about negative consequences such as fundamentalism. Thus, in recent decades, these trends are felt to be extremism tendency of a past era. In encapsulating the thoughts of Alatas, Tavasoli writes paradoxically that although these thoughts are specifically profound, they are out-dated and belong to the period after the Second World War. Yet, he asserts that his thoughts are important and need to be debated and evaluated very carefully and meticulously. In the meantime, Tavasoli describes Shariati's work as a 'good and successful' example of indigenization despite all its 'potential problems'.

Tavasoli has an obscure positive evaluation of the attempts of indigenization in the past and does not rule out the possibility of a new and similar experience in indigenization which can be sensitive to both universal sciences and Iranian/Islamic culture at the same time. Nevertheless, he has a negative evaluation of the current tendencies for indigenization and Islamization. According to Tavasoli, the current Islamization of social sciences

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[1] Shariati and Al'atas did not accept Islamization of social sciences, yet they advocated a kind of independent social sciences which takes into account the social contexts of their countries.

is more ideological and normative than scientific. In other words, what is being called Islamic sociology is more of a normative than descriptive science. To him, in 'present conditions' such ambitions will be exploited by those who try to uproot and debase sociology all together and replace it with ideology under the pretext of indigenization. This is why Tavasoli deals with the indigenization program conditionally and call to postpone it for 'some other time': 'there should be people who are masters in both sociology and Islamic principles who would do years of research and theoretical work within a shared framework to reach to a stage where they can claim to have an alternative theory which is accepted in the world and is comprehensive in all aspects'.

In the current situation, Tavasoli is accentuating on the side of world social sciences and universal sociology. Science is universal and concepts like local and religious science will not be any useful unless it is clear what their aims are. According to him, 'becoming indigenous is not a right decision' unless the conceptual status of indigenization itself is firstly characterized in the sociological theories. Pursuing an independent, isolated science which is specific to us and is of no application in other places is to ignore the 200 years old legacy of the world sociology and restricting ourselves to local debates.

According to Tavasoli (2006), Iranian sociologists are well away from finding 'an alternative theory'. In the current situation, his recommendation includes; systematizing the national research and concentration on the research, attempts for theorization, de-ideologicalization of studies on Islam and Iranian history within the framework of sociological studies, to consider a long term landscape in development of indigenous sociology, not reducing indigenization to localization, and paying attention to universal sociology. Tavasoli considers indigenous sociology 'in this sense' as a good and defendable concept which needs to be pursued in a more profound and in a longer process. The achievements of such indigenous sociology can be acceptable within confirmed principles of sociology and at the same time can be useful and applicable to our society.

Professional sociology but critical: Masoud Chalabi[1] (2006) carried out –in a critical manner- a 'theoretical evaluation of the current situation of social theory in Iran' critically. He sees a 'theoretical mess' in the dominant trends in theoretical studies in Iran. He calls this theoretical mess a 'sociological anomie' which in turn, is a reflection of the social anomie in the larger scale of the society. To Chalabi the most important problems in theoretical sociological work in Iran include; philosophism in the sense of (too) broad generalization in stead of systematic holisticism, using simple and emotionally loaded concepts, lack of theoretical systematicity and lack of attention to being methodical, lack of pivotal theoretical and practical problems, the gap between theory and experience or the lack of empirical evaluation of theoretical works, lack of using generic concepts instead of loaned and scattered subjective constructs, chronic infatuation with the universal sociologists or vice versa by-passing them, lack of enough and systematic attention paid to relations among sub-systems of society and analyzing the connections among political, economical, social and cultural fields, and finally lack of attention paid to the relations between theories and lack of attempts to combine and integrate theories in field of theoretical sociology.

Chalabi tries to promote a kind of double sided theoretical/historical and positive/normative sociology. The main positive issues include; the social order and social change and the main normative issues are freedom and justice. He believes that sociology needs to pay attention to all four issues at the same time and on the other hand the links between positive and normative issues need to be thought of. In the same vein, questions like how can social order and freedom or order and justice be reconciled and what are the reasons and obstacles of social change in terms of reaching to human equality should be introduced.

Chalabi asserts that for a theoretical advancement, theoretical sociology rather than sociological theories needs to be accentuated. He proposes four general theoretical rules in this regard. 1). Paying attention to theoretical synthesis and combinations which should not be taken as eclecticism. 2). To compare social theories with the fuzzy logic that is to keep in mind that social theories cannot be true or false in their totality thus, while they can not be ignored as sources of knowledge, they should not be overestimated in extreme. 3). To avoid all kinds of dichotomization e.g. part vs. whole, reality vs. value, individual vs. society, theory vs. method, structure vs. action, the logic of human system vs. human logic, qualitative vs. quantitative methods, order vs. change,

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[1] Chalabi is a professor of sociology at Shahid Beheshti University whose works are well cited as good examples of theoretical and methodological academic work in sociology in Iran. He also a board member of Iranian Sociological Association.

freedom vs. justice etc. 4). Linking theories with data in the sense that the advancement of theoretical sociology should be connected to comparative/historical and empirical sociology in a long run. In this general rule Chalabi speaks of linking the two kinds of theoretical and historical sociology. To him historical and theoretical sociology can only grow in such a give and take interaction. He tries to connect professional sociology which engages with the subjects of social order and change to values of justice and freedom in critical sociology and apply such critical/theoretical tool in the understanding of Iranian history.

Professional sociology but holistic: According to Mohammad Abdullahi[1] (2006), the advancement of social sciences in Iran simultaneously requires differentiation and integration among individual and collective actors as well as in academic fields and specialties. The problem with our social scientists is that they are in a kind of theoretical and intellectual segmentation. In order to overcome this, the researchers of different disciplines need to share their findings in the forms of inter-disciplinary studies so that some kind of coherence pluralism is achieved which can be applied in understanding various angles of the complicated totality of the society. The dominance of segmented disciplinary approaches and religious/ethnic particularism prevents a coherence and integrated experience in the social and political life and hence prevents putting behind the totalitarianism. In their academic life, professors live as isolated islands in their offices within the official bureaucratic divisions. The academia is faced with political and ideological maximalist threats on one hand, and on the other hand their minimal public sphere is violated through the systems logic. What needs to be done in such a situation? Abdullahi's solution for solving the cognitive problems like conceptual dualities and reaching to a coherence pluralism is more of a social practice than a pure subjective activity. To Abdullahi the link and connection between individual and social actors in social sciences need to be reinforced and the promotion of disciplinary and meta-disciplinary communities is an influential strategy to move from isolated to integrated mode. The official and organizational divisions -hence unscientific ones- have reduced our opportunity of understanding the totality of society. Iranian sociologists need to work together on the critical issues of the society and each address a dimension of it. He argues that being active in scientific associations can provide a ground to link universities, disciplines and social sciences actors and facilitates the influence of social sciences in research and education and hence the development of the country. Abdullahi's solution entails promotion of social capital of social scientists and advocates creating bridges among specialties, individuals, and scientific associations and institutions.

Professional sociology but reflective: Fazeli describes looking into and being concerned with the social ecology as a form of reflective and critical self consciousness of social sciences actors in terms of their professional practices. The reflective social scientists accept the indigenization as an indispensible category and in their attempts to relate to universal sciences try not to alienate their own immediate socio-cultural environment and are aware of the influence of the context on the professional work. As such, this approach is more of a professional self awareness rather than being a type of pre-determined, ideology or policy, like that of official indigenization. Therefore, Fazeli does not yield into the idea that the debate of indigenization is taboo by itself and concludes that the academia should accept discussing the influence of social context at least as an intellectual issue and if the discourse of indigenization would like to grow it needs to turn into an inner-university idea so that there is room for free debate on it (Fazeli, 2007).

Critical sociology but pluralist: Yusef Abazari[2] (2006) criticizes academic sociology for being 'obsessed with method' and its emphasis on precise definition of concepts and other formal concerns and argues that these issues are the cause of weakness of Iranian sociology. According to him the problem of Iranian sociologists is not having clear 'research programs' which have the consent of the scientists. Drawing on philosophy of sciences he argues that there should be a research program for each person. Another important issue for him is the necessity of critical and engaging theoretical debates; the theoretical frameworks need to compete and challenge each other and hence go forward. In contrast to Abdullahi's 'coherence pluralism' he emphasizes on pluralism in research programs. He rejects integration of various research frameworks and believes that such notion has arisen from mixing scientific issues with organizational ones. He believes that in condition of

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[1] Abdullahi is a professor of sociology at Allameh Tabatabi University who has acted as the president of Iranian Sociological Association during the last two terms. He is known as an influential social sciences actor.
[2] Abazari is a well-known intellectual and sociologist who teaches at Tehran University and is considered to be within the critical theory tendency.

pluralism for theoretical views, each person should enter this pluralism based on his/her own intellectual position and challenge others.

In terms of 'indigenization of sociology' he raises the question; Is there a consensus among social scientists on this project as a research program? He addresses this question from the perspective of philosophy of science. He sees the problem as being the lack of demarcation between the logic of science and the logic religion in the discussion of Islamization of sociology. In an uncompromising way he distinguishes between logic of science and religion while pointing out that the concept of 'foundation' has been refuted in new philosophy of science. He argues one hand that the discussion of indigenization and Islamization of sociology need to be resolved logically, and on the other hand argues that social scientists do not recognize this project as a research program. Nevertheless, in his criticism of indigenous/Islamic science he draws more on logical/philosophical conceptions rather than taking into account the actual consensus (or the lack of it) of Iranian sociologists. He finds indigenization meaningless yet advises sociologists to pay attention to concrete issues of Iran: 'what is justice and freedom is a philosophical question but the fact that there is a campaign under that banner in our society right now necessitates the attention of sociologist and make it clear what needs to be done'. By criticizing academic sociology and the idea of reinforcement of scientific communities to reach to a coherence pluralism (as an organizational rather than scientific issue), Abazari appears to neglect the focal significance of the two institutions of university and scientific association as a social framework of practices of Iranian sociologists, without proposing an alternative social framework for relating the sociologist to society as a focal point of concrete campaigns for freedom and justice.

Simple alternative discourses

Iranian sociological paradigms: Azadarmaki (2006, 2007) proposes an alternative discourse which does not have the characteristics of dual alternative discourses as it solely defines itself against official indigenization and not the universal discourses. Similar to some other sociologists who are working in such hard situation, his views are at times, obscure and contradictory. Azadarmaki argues for reinforcement of the existing sociology and alleviating its obstacles instead of indigenization. He views the Iranian social sciences as being in the process of development and establishment and argues that instead of criticizing social sciences and pursuing the indigenization program there should be support for sociology to establish itself through promotion of scientific institutions/associations and identity building among scientific actors and betterment of the education organization and publication of social sciences texts. However, he finds the development of Iranian paradigms necessary and here he talks of the necessity of foundational critic of Iranian sociology and the change in the way of establishment of it. In his views, the Iranian sociology is suffering from theoretical disarray due its 'reverse establishment'. By reverse establishment he means focusing on social pathological studies (social engineering) before reaching a theoretical development which in turn has contributed to shallow understanding of sources of problems. Iranian sociology has not yet clarified its positions –whether as a critical or affirmative relationship- in terms of political/power and religion/culture realms. In order to construct its Iranian paradigm, sociology in Iran needs to engage with self criticism in a foundational way, clarify its relations with social, cultural and political contexts and contemplate on realms of religion, intellectualism, politics and participation, democracy and despotism, reforms and etc. Sociologists should pay attention to Iranian history and cultural history in designing Iranian paradigms. Azadarmaki prioritizes historical studies over pathological studies and argues that as long as Iranian sociologists lack a clear understanding of Iranian history and do not judge their society's changes sociologically they can not lay the foundations of an Iranian sociology with its own specific theory/theories. Nevertheless, the pre-condition of a sociological approach towards Iranian history is that methodologically it should not be seen as political and one part of history is not selected and accentuated ideologically. Azadarmaki's emphasis on paying attention to all periods of Iranian history is a sign of its difference from the official indigenization program which focuses on the history of Islamic period. On the other hand, such a particular Iranian sociological perspective as an Iranian sociological theory needs to be founded on a descriptive bulk which can be provided –for example- by anthropological and cultural studies. It seems that Azadaramaki believes that historical studies provide more for the theoretical and anthropological/cultural studies provide more

for the descriptive aspect of social sciences in Iran.[1] In this process, intellectual and paradigm fields will be formed in Iranian sociology which may have similarities with universal sociological traditions as well. It seems that Azadarmaki's perspective is more into balances between Iranian paradigms and the intellectual patterns in the mainstream sociology.

Navigator sociology: Hammidreza Jalaipour's[2] (2008) defense of the non-ideological nature of mainstream sociology as a scientific discipline which can help solve social problems in Iran is an example of active and democratic application of social theory of some sociologists who are characterized as scientists-activists. In the meantime, this defense is entangled with attempts of the reformist movement in self reflection and projecting its own situation in the existing political, cultural and scientific practices. Jalaipour marks the boundaries of science and politics and meta-physics or between social sciences/political and religious activities and at the same time connect them together in a certain way. He tries to make the best use of religion, social sciences and the possibilities of political action. He points out the importance of the analytical, interpretive and critical traditions of sociology by drawing on classic figures; Durkheim, Weber, and Marx but accentuates the mainstream sociology as an analytical-causal understanding. Against the accusation of calling sociological theories ideological, he defends them as functioning helpfully like a compass. In his perspective, ideology is somehow considered to be false awareness and misleading while sociology –being scientific- can be insightful in understanding and solving social and political problems. The helpfulness and compass character of sociological theories and their usefulness in providing theoretical frameworks is not a positivistic claim in terms of true or falsehood of the theoretical frameworks. However, they are not indifferent to empirical evidences and at least tentatively orient us to important reasons and solutions for social problems.

Jalaipour who believes that we need sociology to reform the society emphasizes –in different ways- on problem oriented approach in dealing with the issues of the society and argues that it is necessary for sociologist to have the experience and the emotional societal concerns in theorizing the situation. This problem-orientation needs to be accompanied by theoretical sources of social sciences. The problem-oriented approach distinguishes itself from the mainstream social engineering by applying sociological theory whereas the official social engineering approach encounters the problems without having theoretical foundations serving governmental aims. The concept of compass is associated with moving in a restless sea which probably characterizes the political practices in current Iran. Sociology is a tool which is necessary in navigating through such a condition. The active application of this compass is to 'develop theoretical framework' which needs to be carried out in a combinational manner after contemplating about our own problems and evaluating the relevancy of sociological theories.

Jalaipour's defends sociological theories against three groups of critics. The first group is for example Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi who finds the theoretical and historical principles of mainstream sociology in opposition to religious principles and defends a substitute 'Islamic' sociology. The second group includes academics and intellectuals like Syed Javad Tabatabai who reckons that Iranian sociologists formulate a series of apparently scientific issues which are mostly useful in discursive challenges of political forces. The latter group emphasizes the rigidity and impossibility of thinking within the framework of the tradition in Iran. The third group of critics with the example of Abazari mainly evaluates sociological theories from the perspective of critical sociology. According to Jalaipour, most of discussions and texts of young sociologists who are interested in critical sociology are not based on clear arguments. 'They draw on the ideas of a great thinker, according to the conditions, and reject or sabotage the criticism against themselves on the basis of the greatness and the influence of that thinker'. The position of Jalaipour against these three groups of critics of sociology is in fact the strategic map of part of the reformist movement against the religious mono-culturalism, abstract philosophical rationalism, and destructive critical approach.

Jalaipour's defense of universal sociology is not an absolute one. He does not claim that theoretical stock of universal sociology has all the answers. It is possible that those theories either do not have the answer to a specific problem or the available answer does not relate to explicating that issue in the Iranian society. That is

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[1]According to Chalabi, historical sociology provides empirical data which are interpreted by theoretical sociology. Azadarmaki sees historical sociology in a broader sense of its empirical concept and says: 'Iranian sociology can find a precise source of understanding and topics by focusing on Iranian history. Tavasoli also asserts non-ideological use of Islam and history in the sociological frameworks.

[2] Jalaipour teaches sociology at Tehran University. He is a political activist and a member of the central council of the Islamic Iran Participation Party. He was the editor-in-chief of some reformist newspapers within the Reformist government of Khatami (1997-2005).

why he recommends establishing an 'active relationship' rather than an 'imitational consumption' with the sociological theories. Such an active and creative consumption means to apply the available theories synthetically as existing intellectual sources to build the required theoretical framework. Theorization, specifically on the macro level- is not strong in Iran but he does not find the idea of 'an Iranian school of sociology' a far-fetched one. By continuous theorization through formulating theoretical frameworks which require the active consumption of the existing theories, it is possible to move from the foundation-laying stage of social sciences to the stage of accumulating knowledge and it is in the latter stage that we can expect the formation of an Iranian school.

Theoretical and dialogical bases of problem-oriented sociology: Hadi Khaniki's[1] (2006, 2007) views are similarly characterized by criticizing the mainstream social engineering and links sociology with the reformist movement in order to promote civil society and public spheres based on dialogue. In his view the formal social engineering does not engage in basic theoretical discussions and considers the role of social researchers as facilitators of social change pursued by the government rather than creating innovative works. According to Khaniki this view –which claims to deal with the day to day problems of the society apparently- essentially escapes from attending to the critical basic problems of the society since it tries to solve issues rudimentarily without having the required theoretical basis. Such an approach reduces social sciences to the level of a kind of hasty bureaucratic knowledge in terms of government issues and leaves it bewildered in the baseless practicalities. Khaniki believes that among the reasons for escaping from theoretical approach in studying social problems is the complication and hardship of engaging with issues of Iranian society. He warns that problem-orientation approach should not reduce social sciences to transient short-term and politically induced practices. In the meantime, not attending to concrete detailed issues in Iran is because they are not only difficult to deal with scientifically but they also pose higher degrees of political risks costs.

Khaniki recommends an inter- and meta-disciplinary approach in attending to the case of Iranian society in terms of its political, cultural and social dimensions. He turns theorizing practices into dialogue within the circles and scientific communities. Such dialogue is to deal with issues of Iran from all the three cultural, political and social perspectives. Such theoretical view on Iranian issues would eventually involve 'an attempt to make scientific the lived experiences and narratives of Iranian scholars' on one hand and on the other hand, pay attention to various world experiences including social studies in the Muslim world. Khaniki discusses some cultural and political prerequisites in terms of theorization in Iran. He argues that freedom of speech, lack of restrictions for theorization and research, lack of external pressure and control, legal guarantees, job security, and paying attention to normative values of dialogue and tolerance, creativity and acceptance of the Other are among the important issues which influence theorization. The theorization process, as an unrestricted procedure of discovery and critical and alternative thinking is always exposed to un-equilibrium or multi-equilibrium status. The cognitive try and error should be considered a natural tendency rather than a conspiracy. To promote theorization it is necessary to acknowledge the diversity and cultural challenges to status quo and the possibility of critic of official and traditional ideas should be provided. The political and cultural institutions tend to keep the theorization stable within the official and bureaucratic frameworks. Despite his criticism of the interference of political and cultural institutions in the realm of social sciences, Khaniki finds the discursive connection among the three institutions of university, culture and politics necessary. In his view, existence of discursive structures is necessary for promotion of comprehensive, deep and constant dialogue to leave behind the pre-discursive state of the society.

Dual alternative discourses

Sociology as a window to the public: In the dilemma of universal sociology and national sociology, Sara Shariati talks about the two requirements of 'unity of the discipline' and 'diversity of approaches'. The world sociology emphasizes on integrity, universality, and neutrality of sociology and national and endogenous sociology defends the necessity of decolonization of social sciences, and defining these sciences in terms of cultural and historical differences. According to her description, each of these two approaches has its own merits and weaknesses. She criticizes the position of universal sociology by discussing a dual political and

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[1] Khaniki teaches communication at Allameh Tabatabai University. He is a board member of Iranian Association for Culture studies and Communication. He has been a political activist and is a member of central council of Islamic Iran Participation Party. He has been President Khatami's advisor for 8 years. He is now the Secretary General of the International Institute of Dialogue among Civilizations which is led by Khatami.

epistemological problem. Politically speaking, the world sociology ignores the national differences and exports the theoretical patterns to 'third world' countries where they may not suit the social contexts of those countries. Hence, it results in perpetuation of dominance and contributes to North American and European ethnocentrism in social sciences. From epistemological point of view by drawing on historical turn and constructivism, the presuppositions of universality of theoretical patterns, Realism, and Objectivism are subject to skepticism. If the subject matter of sociology is the society in its concreteness, then the discipline in each society is to deal with its own special issues and landscapes hence, the general theories and methods of sociology cannot be applied in all contexts. The growth of sociology in the world has passed through the dual processes of internationalization and nationalization. The internationalization of sociology was a disciplinary requirement while the expansion of sociology based on national contexts is an index of dynamism of the discipline and not attending to it will result in uniformity and inefficiency of sociology in other geographical areas. The internationalization of sociology should not undermine the development of national sociology. The sociological theories which are now considered to be universal have had their own national and cultural contexts and have taken on different narrations from one society to another. If the 'southern' countries want to change their marginal role and share in production of social sciences, they need to establish their own sociological traditions based on their own specific issues. However, national sociology should avoid questioning the discipline's integrity. If we take into account the national or cultural/religious approaches we will be left with numerous sociologies to the count of nations, cultures, and religions while we need to de-nationalize the sciences more than ever. Although science has been changing its capital throughout history –during a period the capital was Baghdad, Damascus, and Alexandria and now it is New York, Paris and London- it has no nationality and it is not possible to pin its birth on a specific nation.

Sciences are the result of the accumulation of human knowledge throughout history and hence they are not merely endogenous. In the discussion on the world or national sociology Shariati tends to escape facing the dilemma of accepting the discourse of universal, unbiased and neutral sciences or falling into a blind Nativism as a mere mutinous reaction against the intellectual imperialism and tendency to cut off from the metropolis of the theoretical colonialism[1]. Such dual confrontation makes her talk about the 'necessity of making sociology multilingual'. This is a metaphor for a unified society whose citizens do not speak one single language. This view rejects mono-culturalism for multi-culturalism. In her view the diversity of approaches or multi-linguality of social sciences, does not mean to cast skepticism on the scientificity of the project or pushing a relativistic cap on it. To advocate a mono-lingual, mono-cultural universality in sociology not only imposes uniformity and closure in the discipline, but it will make sociology inefficient and infertile in other historical and cultural contexts. The diversity and richness of sociology is dependent on establishing dialogue within the international community of sociologists and reinforcement of national and regional studies while at the same time emphasizing the independence and integrity of the discipline. In this way the sociological knowledge will reflect the sophistication of our today's world and can distance from the foundationalism in which it is often trapped in (Shariati 2007).

Sara Shariati[2] sees sociology as a window to the public and addresses her sociologists audience that 'I would so much like to open this window to the society and tell those present here [the audience] that nothing too serious is happening here and we only need to try to think together and open the door and go out of this hall to the society and be present in the fabrics of the society because the main thing is happening there'. Similar to Azadarmaki but in a different sense, she also believes that the problem of social sciences in Iran is the 'reverseness'. 'The Iranian sociologists walk on their heads not on their feet'. This metaphor is to point out that the Iranian sociologists pay too much attention to academic theories while they do not know what is happening in the society. 'What is the use of a sociologist who can not predict the smallest social events or do not know the conditions of their society?' She believes that there are two sociologies in attending the social issues. Her description of 'emergency sociology' which thinks about issues and subjects after the occurrence of an emergency situation with a politicized approach is a reminder of the mainstream social engineering approach. She, on the other hand recommends a 'clinical sociology' which requires the sociologist to be present in the fabrics of the society in order to find medication for 'the pain of their society'. A clinical sociologist is always

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[1] Here Sara Shariati refers to Alatas (2006).
[2] Sara Shariati is the daughter of the late Ali Shariati who teaches sociology at Tehran University. She is considered to be a public religious intellectual.

present at the 'bed' of the society and such a presence in the society is more of a 'critical practice of challenging the social order' in contrast to social engineering approach. The clinical sociologist enters the society and experiences various social phenomena and analyzes them with theoretical tools available to her/him rather than making judgments based on his/her theories from a distance. According to her, theory should be the outcome of research. In order to stand on their own feet, the Iranian sociologists need to get into society, analyze the social issues and produce theories based on it (Shariati 2006).

Social sciences in a multi-narrative world: Mohammad Tajik[1] (2008) argues that the development of social sciences in Iran requires putting behind the positivistic-physicalistic approaches, de-petrifaction, de-totalitarianism, and reactivating the 'social' by returning it to the political side of its establishment. He reminds us of Durkheim saying that 'if sociology is of no use in solving social problems, it is not worth wasting an hour'. Following Giddens, he calls western sociology in the modern time as 'an orthodox consensus' which turns the modernist disciplinary practices and uniformity tendencies from normative programs to analytical framework in understanding the reality. As such it engulfs as the core of its discourse the structure or all the controlling and regulatory forces which totalize the social[2].

According to Tajik pre-revolutionary sociology was suffering from 'a dual orthodox consensus' as it had added the Iranian orthodox orientations to the already existing positivistic and physicalistic orthodoxies of the structure and order. 'In the era before the revolution we were only finding linguistic equivalences for western sociological concepts and were copying the western sociologists' texts instead of self analysis and cultural and social self reflections'. After the revolution, the advocates of indigenization, this time under the pretext of Islam dressed up the same common western sociology and thus remained on the already existing 'dual orthodox consensus'. The aim of the formal indigenous sociology is to recreate the Islamic legacy in the Iranian intellectual lives and turning the sciences to tools of empowering the newly born religious system and contributing to political measures and social planning. In such a way, the form and theoretical, methodological content of positivistic sociology was decorated by Islamic teachings. Therefore the outcome of indigenization and Islamization of social sciences after three decades has been nothing but a kind of a 'dual orthodox consensus' and perpetuation of the same pervious sociological narration with little changes on the cover.

Tajik introduces a different perspective of sociologist as an interpreter and sociology as a multi-voiced knowledge. The sociologist has an interpretive function: the one who decodes the signs and symbols and facilitates the link between the societies and traditions. While having roots in indigenous traditions, s/he gives voice to cultures which could otherwise remain voiceless and mute. Tajik accepts the idea of specific and general sociologies. Societies have different lived experiences as they have different cultures and value systems thus, instead of a single sociology with generalizable verdicts, we should think of sociologies. Social sciences in any given society need to deal with its own distinct historical, civilizational and cultural factors with a specific perspective so that it can voice the realities of that society. In this perspectivist view social knowledge can not reflect the independent objective world but it has a situational nature, dependent on certain culture, time, place and even ethno-centrism. The best thing to do in such sociology is to contribute our own narratives with the aim of achieving the most valuable description and arrangement of human actions and institutions. Imposition of objectivism and neutrality in the western social science has suppressed these diverse narratives and theories.

Nevertheless, Tajik's specific sociology has a generalizable dimension as well which is due to the fact that any thought system carries the footprints and traces of other systems of thoughts. He tries to define a common geography in which thinking of a science called sociology –which carries both the bulk of human knowledges and is our way of understanding our own different society- is possible. The perspectivist approach should not theoretically impress us so much as not to hear the theoretical voices of the others. Tajik urges us to enter and stop self-consciously in our own distinctive geographical texture and at the same time invites us to be present in common geography of various theories.

The social sciences of Iranian ecology throughout the globe: Naser Fakuhi[3] (2007, 2008) considers the mainstream discourse of indigenization of social sciences mainly political and ideological as well as the

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[1] Tajik teaches political sciences at Shahid University. He has been President Khatami's advisor and was a political and scientific activist during the Reformist Government of Khatami.
[2] Tajik has been influence by Baumann in this analysis. See footnotes in 97 and 120.
[3] Fakuhi teaches anthropology at Tehran University. He has been the former co-editor of Iranian Journal of Anthropology' and Anthropological society of Iran. He is presently a board member of Iranian sociological Association.

discourse of universality of the sciences. According to him, the existing discourse of indigenization is more into finding reasons to distance itself from western social sciences than providing suitable conditions for theorization processes. This approach tries to start social sciences from scratch by ignoring the existing global stock of knowledge. To him, issues like universality of science, international scientific communities and English language as the lingua-franca are linked to political and economical powers in the world which in turn put third world countries in a powerless situation. The advocates of universal social science orient this bulk of knowledge to the service of money and power oligarchies rather than humanity. The science policies/strategies are determined by the powerful governments and capitalist institutions hence are not neutral. Nowadays the mainstream discourse of globalization tends to eradicate the cultural and geographical boundaries while the control of political boundaries and information has been on the rise within the recent decades and the most powerful world powers are protected through certain linguistic and political borders. The production of sciences in any given language strengthens or weakens some of the political strategies. Nowadays, by drawing on the utopian idea that all thinkers speak the same language and can easily communicate with one another many consider English language as a linking and neutral language rather than the language of a certain culture. According to them, production of science in English is to be assumed as a share for the country of the producer of the science rather than being an added value to a specific cultural and geographical sphere.

Fakuhi believes that the common understanding of indigenization -to adapt external science to internal conditions- is indeed the same imposition of universal concepts to local levels which in turn, legitimates universal level scientifically and thus, undermines the capability of resistance of the local actors. Real indigenization is to increase theoretical and practical capabilities and attempts to reach a relative independence and more equal distribution in science through combining internal and external sources of knowledge. Theorizing in social sciences needs –more than anything else- to combine and form a kind of self understanding, based on a synthesis of internal and external views[1]. According to Fakuhi the future science needs to be thought of as multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and a combination of indigenous and global sciences. To theorize the society, the social scientists need to know the relations between scientific fields and those of political and economical and enjoy a good practical awareness in terms of internal and external sources of these sciences.

Fakuhi does not see social theory as an intellectual abstraction and analyzes it in terms of social practice of the theoretician, the social impact of theorizing and the relation between social theory and power and hence the role of scientific actors is clarified. In the condition of social sciences' dependence on political and economical strategies, the scientific actors need to create institutions and processes through which they are able to function in a relative independence of such strategies. The current global system is gradually eradicating types of scientific independence and ethics. However, there is the possibility of independent scientific action/strategy on the side of scientists, civil organizations, scientific networks and associations. In order to reach an equal distribution of knowledge globally, these actors need to attend to reaching an equal distribution of knowledge globally and creating the link among scientists and scientific institutions of developing and developed countries beyond the requirements of the power. The Iranian scientific actors of the type Fakuhi discusses will be the residents of a specific 'entity' called 'Iranian world' which includes Iran scientists, civil organizations, scientific communities and the members of Iranian scientific diaspora[2]. Fakuhi's indigenization plan specifically involves scientists and academics inside and outside the country and aims to create suitable grounds for intellectual cooperation between these two groups of Iranians. As if the only this 'Iranian world' which is practically aware of internal and external sources and is capable of forming a multi-cultural, multi-lingual science which is a synthesis of the indigenous and universal sciences. Fakuhi attends to the necessity of indigenization of social sciences in the Iranian sphere, but considers this entity with its network characteristics in the world scale.

With the argument of globalization, the Iranian diaspora has nowadays been working in the research centers of the West which have been expanding due to Western increasing interests in the studies on Iran. According to him, these people are researching Iran 'from the distance' while with the appearance of local anthropologists and

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[1] In terms of the link between self and other Fokuhi pays attention to hybrid approaches rather than dichotomic ones. The issue is how one can be 'self' and 'other' (Fokuhi 1386).
[2] The Iranian scientific diaspora are a group of mainly educated Iranian citizens who have migrated to other mainly western- countries and posses rather high positions in scientific, educational and research fields. Apparently more than one million Iranian –or having Iranian origins- live all over the world and mainly in the United States. Furthermore, this migrated population mainly have high cultural and economical capital and within the last three decades, this has helped create an Iranian scientific diaspora in the universities around the world including some highly reputed ones in Europe and United States (Fokuhi 1386).

sociologists nowadays, the era of exoteric studies seem to have passed. Thus, there is a need to move the focal point of understanding Iranian society into the country. It seems that Fakuhi draws on the Orientalist patterns and asserts that the unbalanced relationship which existed between ordinary locals and western researchers could, under current conditions start again between Iranian internal academics and those in the West. These diasporic academics use their conditions (being bilingual, and bi-cultural, the ability to travel to and from Iran and at the same time living far from the tensions in Iran) to advance their Iranian studies without thinking about the consequences of the connection between their research institutions and the certain national government. The Iranian scientific diaspora creates myths and assumes a nationalist discourse for itself. They represent the Iranian population living abroad as the most prominent scientists of the third world and the 'top of the top' of other immigrants. This group considers their scientific achievements on the account of Iranian scientific development while their achievements only belong to certain institutions and establishments. The Iranian diaspora who have the aim of studying people of Iran have not been able to transfer any of their experiences to people of Iran or create any opportunities in terms of the advancement of Iranian scientific capabilities. They have often merely promoted a highly stereotypical and recurring literature on Iran which involves covering half of the realities and at times representing unreal images.

According to Fakuhi, with developing 'diasporic studies' inside Iran, we should try to understand the demographic, sociological and cultural characteristics and capabilities of the diasporic realities without mystifying and idealizing them and then it should be made possible to use these capabilities in a two way relationship in order to strengthen the scientific capabilities and increasing the international scientific presence of the country. The scientific validity and instrumental biases of the diasporic activities within the last three decades needs to be evaluated. The expansion of the instrumental view on the subject of studying 'Iran' carries long term damages which can be prevented by promotion of cooperation between Iranian academics and Iranian scientific diaspora on the basis of an ethical convention. Such 'grand ethical conventions' can critically overcome both neo-liberal discourse which denies the third world countries' rights to control and orientate the studies on them and the conspiracy theory discourse which sees traces of espionage in every exogenous study. The current process of globalization which prioritizes the universal level perpetuates the dominance of universal on the national levels. In changing this hegemonic relationship, he puts the emphasis on the Iranian sphere but in a universal scale. In prioritizing the Iranian over the global context he sees a practical and natural legitimacy. However, he points out that 'cultural relativism should not turn into a pretext for the local powers to violate people's rights' and in an apparently contradictory view he considers 'the promotions of various globalities' necessity for living in a world which is increasingly turning into a network. Fakuhi acknowledges the difficulty in thinking about the dilemma of globalization and indigenization because in these difficult conditions any answer can cause misunderstanding and be misused'. Nevertheless, he decides to express his perspective in such difficult conditions rather than remaining silent. This feature of contemplating on difficult situations and expression of perspectives rather than remaining silent or avoiding contemplation is gradually emerging among some of the social scientists in Iran. Fakuhi provides opportunities to go beyond the current dilemmas and difficult situations and necessitates the integration of endogenous and exogenous views for indigenization of social sciences in Iran which is based on an ethical cooperation by the both sides of 'the Iranian world'. In a general evaluation, his ethical cooperation seems to have a utopian nature and requires on one hand, the activism of the Iranian diaspora in terms of overcoming its institutional restrictions and penetration into the knowledge and power relations and on the other hand, activism of the Iranian academics to reach the scientific capabilities to contemplate on their 'self' and evaluate the scientific practices of those in western scientific institutions. However, perhaps it is through such activities that social sciences can construct relevant theories, increase the quality of its outputs and places itself within the Iranian sphere.

Sociology as a communicative knowledge: According to Esmail Khalili[1] (2008) the suggestions of 'the dilemma of indigenous and global science' has its roots in ideological confrontations. In fact he talks of ideologies of indigenization and universality in science instead of indigenous and global sciences. The introduction of science as a dilemma brings about unpleasant consequences as attending to each side of these two will endanger the social sciences itself, in the first place. In the confrontation of these dual ideologies, choosing

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[1] Khalili is a researcher at Cultural and Social Studies Research Centre and a member of the Sociology of Science and Knowledge group in Iranian Sociological Association.

each one over another will challenge the establishment of social sciences by creating 'intellectual and subjective obstructions'. In the indigenous view the knowledge world turns into independent and isolated atoms which are restricted in their understanding and they have no link to each other. The universalist view has an implicit cognitive totalitarianism which imposes a totality onto various minds and strips knowledge off its inter-subjective nature. In the nativist view, the world is turned into understandings and identities in denial of each other which stay in isolation in the best case scenario and fight each other in the worst. The assumption of universalism of knowledge will bring around a kind of cognitive hence, cultural, social and political totalitarianism which on one hand, denies the knowledge in principle and on the other hand, will lay the foundations for a hegemonic theory and philosophy of history.

Khalili considers the dilemma of indigenous and universal science as 'a infertile and destructive dead-end' and recommends a non-dilemmatic view that requires a special epistemology, a type that sees knowledge as a product of sharing of various subjectivities and prioritizes interacting between 'self' and 'other' over confrontation with the 'other'. Such epistemology chooses the logic of 'this AND that –indigenous and universal-' instead of 'this OR that –indigenous or universal'. Khalili tries to solve this issue by understanding science as language. Language is basically interactive. Both 'self' and 'other' need to have their own languages and at the same time need to use a language that the other can understand. As such it can be said that knowledge is constantly indigenous and universal. If the knowledge is not indigenous and nothing original has been said by the producer of that knowledge, there has been some kind of cheating and if some thing is said which can not be understood by the others then it can not be labeled as knowledge. Thus, science is nothing but an interactive world and communicative logic. In such a logic, knowledge can neither be merely considered indigenous, nor universal but is the dialogue between the two.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In this section the implication of the above-mentioned discussions on sociology in Iran will be evaluated by applying concepts used by Alatas, Burawoy and Connell. In nowadays Iran there can be the talk of various global, indigenous, and alternative sociologies. The dominant trend in the universities is the universal sociology and at the same time an indigenous trend –to some extent from outside and inside- is challenging it. These challenges have not yet been very constructive and it even seems that it has resulted in some kind of infertility and uncreativity in both. The indigenous social sciences criticize the pre-suppositions in the ontological and epistemological foundations of the mainstream sociology in the universities. However, as long as this view has roots in official and unscientific institutions they can only be called 'pseudo critical sociology'. On the other hand, the governmental sector –sometimes without epistemological sensitivities- pays attention to applying social sciences with the aim of realizing its own program goals in terms of reforming the cultural behavior and advancement of development programs. This trend of thought which has its roots in governmental interferences rather than academic research programs can be called 'pseudo-policy sociology'. The main trend of academic social sciences is relatively more prepared to cooperate with the social engineering but does not seem to favor the current discussions on Islamization of social sciences. The reaction of these academics in terms of indigenization program of social sciences has been described as a phobia where they are scared of these debates and try to avoid it like a taboo subject. Against such conditions, most of the academics have sought shelter in the universal social sciences and defend it as neutral and objective science. This can be described as the passive consumption of social sciences which is obsessed with the concerns of methodology and has not yet shown much creativity.

Several approaches are being developed around the Iranian Sociological Association of sociologists in against both one-sided universalism and indigenous trends which contemplate more on reconstruction of academic sociology and the development of 'alterative social sciences'. Some professors see the common trends in social sciences in academia as lacking the required qualities. According to them, these trends are trapped in the methodological obsessions while not benefitting from it. Among these professors Tavasoli, Chalabi, and Abdullahi have specific prominence. In addition to accentuating the promotion of theoretical and methodological qualities of social sciences, these figures emphasize the expansion of scientific associations and communities and professional ethics. As presidents and board members of the Iranian Sociological Association of Iran in recent years, these professors have been actively involved in forming a consensus in terms of the main issues of Iranian

sociology, expansion of communication and interaction among social scientists and promotion of normative and ethical rules.

The Iranian alternative discourses are also trying to distance themselves from the paralysis brought about by this phobic situation and suggests their own programs and views against the official plans without escaping from participating in discussion of indigenization of social sciences. The advocates of 'simple alternative discourses' while criticizing the official indigenization program, propose a discourse which functions as a substitute and yet defines itself in agreement with the global discourse of sociology. Some of these simple alternative discourses attend to the totality of Iran's history -rather concentrating solely on Islamic period- and see indigenization not in merely Islamization but in Iranization of social sciences. They try to put the country's history and culture –as having multiple periods and elements- as the focal point of their studies and as such hope to promote an Iranian sociology based on its social, cultural and historical contexts. Another trend of simple alternative discourses which exists among the activist in reformist movement calls for active use of achievements of social sciences and defends the mainstream sociology as an objective and realistic science. In this specific way of active application, social sciences have found a democratic function in promoting equality, civil society and reform of socio-political processes. This approach defends sociology as 'an objective and realistic science', however, by using it in a creative and active way in practice it has been able to link social knowledge and the day to day reformism of a specific society. In this paper three narratives of active application of social sciences theories by the Reformist movement are called 'navigator sociology, theoretical and dialogical bases of problem-oriented sociology and the multiple narrative sociology. Against the weakness of the common policy sociology these narratives call for deepening the theoretical discussion and attending to the main rather than subsidiary issues, and expansion of democratic processes in understanding and solving social issues. In contrast to ideological bureaucratic social sciences, these narratives call for democratization of social sciences through strengthening its scientific, democratic, and civil dimensions and the reconstruction of society through participation of civil society actors. This trend calls for democratic promotion of the existing sociology in professional, critical and policy dimensions and at the same time shows some signs of policy sociology. Jalaipour, Khaniki, and Tajik emphasize on application of social sciences in social reforms but Tajik's approach is based on postmodernist approach rather than the modern trends in the other two approaches. Tajik believes that the official perspectives in sociology in Iran are too modern and entangled with the orthodox consensus. Compared to the other two scholars, a more intense tendency towards de-petrifaction of 'the social', more emphasis on specificity of the societies, and more distinction with the western society and at the same time more tendency towards facilitating the link between various communities and traditions by participating in a multi-narrative and multi-orchestral world, can be seen. The characteristics of Tajik' thoughts bring him close to dual alternative discourses.

The dual alternative discourses avoid the dilemma of indigenous and universal science. They criticize the political and ideological dimensions of both discourses simultaneously and at the same time try not to ignore the democratic and humanist capabilities of attending to indigenous and universal dimensions. This trend of thought with the examples of Shariati, Tajik, Fakuhi and Khalili, call for a formation of an interactive and dialogical world in social sciences and produce thoughts which can reconstruct social sciences as a democratic project both within various local groups and between Iran and the world powers. Perhaps the most creative intellectual trend in Iranian sociology can be traced in the advocates of such dual alternative discourses which have resulted in an expansion of critical and public kinds of sociology in addition to its professional impact. These interactive, communicative, multi-orchestral, multi-cultural and multi-lingual discourses bring to mind the plan of 'homeless intellectuals' who are neither happy with the 'fathers' legacy' nor with the 'neighbor's souvenir'. The main challenge of this 'third way' in a predictable future is being misunderstood by the two common trends of indigenization and universalism. Nevertheless, their intellectual achievements can mend the existing rupture in the intellectual traditions of Iran through attending to previous achievements and promotion of the intellectual levels and eventually provide a better background for the promotion of democratic processes and equal participation of Iranians in the global and local scale.

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