



<https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.23224525.2023.6.8.1.5>

Investigation and Comparison of Four Different Discourses in Sociology and Iranian Society

Ebrahim Ekhlasi¹, Maryam Khaleghinezhad*²

Received Date: April 16, 2023

Accepted Date: June 1, 2023

Abstract

The emergence of hermeneutics and the significance of meaning in the social sciences opened new horizons for the state and society. This study aims to compare the established discourses in sociology and Iranian society as, on the one hand, the emergence of discourse theory and the emphasis on the fluidity of meaning and action has led to the formation of four discourses in sociology, and on the other hand, there is no comprehensive study of the Iranian society in the context of the mentioned discourses. As shown by the characteristics and analysis of these four different periods, the constitutional era was introduced as having a strong society and a weak government. Then the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, the reign of Reza Shah, and the contemporary era were introduced as periods with strong state and society, weak society and strong state, and small state and active society, respectively. It is noteworthy that all the salient features of strength (active) and weakness (passive) are considered to achieve more objective analyses.

Keyword: Discourses, Sociology, Iran society, Hermeneutics, Locale, Muff's.

¹Ph.D. Candidate for Political Sciences, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

²Ph.D. in Political Sciences, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding author)

Email: khaleghinezhad.m@gmail.com

Introduction

Sociology has always investigated the relationship of the state and society from the past to the present. Numerous theories, such as functionalism, structuralism, Marxism, culturalism (Weber), Saussure's linguistics, etc., have been proposed to analyze society and the state. For decades, various theories, influenced by fixed and unchangeable factors, have considered fixed roles and identities for actors. Many sociological analyses also faced fixed and static societies because some theories, such as structuralism focused solely on unilateral factors influencing and determining social principles and rules. Yet, the current combination of these theories in different aspects means that social relations, identities, and activities are no longer analyzed based on unilateralism. Instead, discourse theory is emerging with an emphasis on social change and fluidity. Thus, integration of meaning within society has given analysts a new and more objective perspective in the study of social sciences. Hence, given the features of the period of this theory and the importance of meaning in society, sociology, which is dedicated to the study of the relationship between society and state, has faced new analytical horizons. Accordingly, four specific discourses were formed considering the relationship of society and state in the 18th and 19th centuries from the perspective of sociology. Each discourse represents the level of the state or society activities in different periods, derived from certain semantic systems.

Considering the emphasis of these four discourses on the relationship of state and society in their active or passive roles, the present paper has conducted a comparative study of the Iranian society in the specified time periods of these discourses and considered whether they had been active or passive. Accordingly, the four mentioned discourses were first illustrated in the theoretical framework of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, followed by a description and analysis of the Iranian society in each period based on the consistency or inconsistency with the discourses under study. Finally, the conclusion of the work is presented. Regarding the literature, it is noteworthy that although different valuable works have examined the Iranian society and compared it based on the relationship of the society and state, no

research has compared the Iranian society with the four discourses mentioned, which makes the subject under study different and unique. Therefore, as emphasized in the first section, it may not be possible to comment confidently on the activity or passiveness of a particular society or state in terms of all components and dimensions or make precise comparisons in the form of similarities within the discourses. However, this paper aims to examine some of the priorities and salient features that lead to a kind of compatibility or consistency in each period of Iran with the four discourses in political sociology.

1. Theoretical Framework: Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory

Today, the use of discourse theories is expanding thanks to the epistemological conditions of human societies and the high analytical power of this theory. The word discourse dates back to some 14th-century sources and is associated with the concept of dialogue (McDonnell, 2001: 10). Ferdinand de Saussure took the first step in the establishment of the theory of discourse. He considers language as one of the most critical semantic systems and emphasizes the main structure of language whose primary element includes signs and the meaningful associations among them. He considers the formation of meaning based on the system of differences and thinks of language as a game of chess in which each sign acquires its identity and value in relation to the other and within the framework of a system of rules (Saussure, 1999: 126). Saussure emphasizes the central signifier which gains importance when used in the whole system. The most prominent late theorists of the discourse are Laclau and Mouffe, who believed that any discourse making a semantic system encompasses a part of society and shapes the individual and social discourses and behaviors by capturing the minds of the subjects. They considered the following features for discourse:

- a) Articulation is the process of linking the signs to form a system of meaning. These two theorists extend discourse to the cultural, philosophical, societal, and political dimensions. They argue that the system of social relations, as articulated sets of discourses, are always political structures based on the exercise of power, hostility, and

exclusion. Therefore, the discourses that make up society and regulate our understanding of the world are political structures. From their perspective, discourse constructs the social world in the form of meanings accomplished through language, which is unstable in nature. Hence, language plays a fundamental role in the establishment and representation of reality. Thus, there is no pre-determined reality, and any changes in the discourses transform the overall social system. As a result, discourse conflict creates, changes, and reproduces social reality (Moghaddami, 2011:93).

- b) In addition to articulation, they refer to the signifier and the signified within discourse. Signifiers are abstract entities that imply certain meanings in the context of a particular discourse. The meaning and implications of a signifier are called signified. The node around which other signifiers are collected and articulated is called the central signifier. In contrast, a floating signifier is a signifier with floating or non-fixed signified, finding a fixed meaning by entering the discourse.
- c) Element and time are two other concepts which are granted meaning by various discourses.
- d) Hegemony can be defined as the process of changing an element from the floating into the fixed and stable meaning.
- e) The chain of equivalence and difference plays an important role in identity construction within the discourse because it is constructed against otherness and existing conflicts. Differences disappear through the chain of equivalence (Kasraee, 2009: 343-344).

There is a negation of the certainty and determination of structures in discourse, emphasizing the possibility of formulations. There is no established discourse or identity because otherness always threatens identities and discourses; therefore, a dominant discourse at one point in time may lose its importance at another period. Signs and identities are not fixed, which means that each sign can have a specific meaning in any discourse, and otherness leads to various meanings and identities. In general, floating signifiers acquire a temporary identity and meaning in a discourse,

but the discourse is never completely cohesive or fixed and is always relative and temporary. Each element that enters discourse changes from floating into fixed status. Besides, the central signifiers in discourse are linked through the chain of equivalence to find meaning and stand in contrast with other identities (Sadra, 2007: 174-200). Thus, discourse is a system that gives meaning and identity to external elements with no specific meaning. This process is influenced by conflict, differences, equivalence chains, etc., which may lead to having ups and downs for any discourse in different periods.

2. Four Discourses in Sociology

The state and civil society gain or lose power in different periods under the influence of individuals, groups, classes, individual identities, the type of political contribution, and the relationship with the state. Society has a changing nature from this perspective, which means the conflict of Positivism and Hermeneutics. According to discourse theory, the facts are revealed in discourse and are constantly changing. They are constructed by signs and do not impose their meaning because they change each age and period.

1.2. The First Discourse: Active Society and Passive State (18th and 19th Centuries)

In this period of discourse, the individual is a conscious being and agent who stands against the state. Liberalism emerges in this period and supports the freedom of the individual against the state and the separation of religion from the state. Hobbes and Locke are among the theorists of this period, who believe in the pursuit of individual interests in the form of state and know the state at the service of the individual. They consider social contracts not as a collective interest but as a tool for the realization of individual interests. Marx also considered the state to be class-dependent and to serve the interests of individuals. Anarchists are another group of this period, generally rejecting the state structure and supporting the voluntary social institutions which focus on the operation and collaboration of individuals, leading to the confirmation of an individual's complete independence. In this regard, Spencer believes in the expansion of individualism and independence from the state. In general, this discourse emphasizes individual freedom and state limitation, mainly manifesting the Western civilization

that considers liberalism as the successor of feudalism. Groups and organizations take over the political atmosphere and some state functions. Accordingly, religion has more power as a group in the West during this period.

2.2. The Second Discourse: Active Society and Active State (Late 19th Century to World War I)

In the late 19th century, the two factors of the economic crisis of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution resulted in an active state that contributed as a determining factor in social relations and the formation of society. This state was directly present in private life and interacted with civil society. Modern democracy emerged at this time when individuals pursued their interests in politics and the collective and state arena. The resulting economic crisis led to state intervention in the economy and perception of the free market as an obstacle to individual freedom. Here, state intervention supported individual freedom, leading to the preservation of some capital and the provision of a degree of equality. In the era of the Industrial Revolution, individual freedom from these inequalities and economic hardships required a strong structure and based on the theory of democracy, the government is responsible to ensure equality and balance in society. Thus, the activities of the society are also confined in the form of the interests and limitations imposed by the state through supervision over the society. One such example is the school of utilitarianism, which believes that the state acts for the happiness and joy of individuals. There are also individuals like Weber, John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, and the new Marxists, who express the theory of the relative independence of the state at a time, emphasizing certain state functions. In general, there were interest and pressure groups in this discourse, and the originality of happiness replaced the originality of freedom, while the state had the determining role.

2.3. The Third Discourse: Passive Society and Active State (After World War II)

In this discourse, mass society replaces civil society, and anti-intellectual, romantic, and conservative ideas prevail. Theorists such as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Freud social sources withdrawal and the political power, in which there is no room for individual identity and freedom. Hence, the conscious and active

individual changes into a passive agent, and an inclusive or totalitarian state is established. Theorists such as Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin considered this type of society as a mass society in which culture and society are a reflection of the ideological power created by the ideological power of the state in which the power of the structure forms the basis. Therefore, structuralism and the decisive influence of structures in society can be evident. Behaviorism in this area also considers the effect of interaction and the role of the individual in the desired position, while the environment has very important impacts on action and reaction. Democracy means pluralism, achieved through the reduction of public participation; thus, the weakest civil society is formed here.

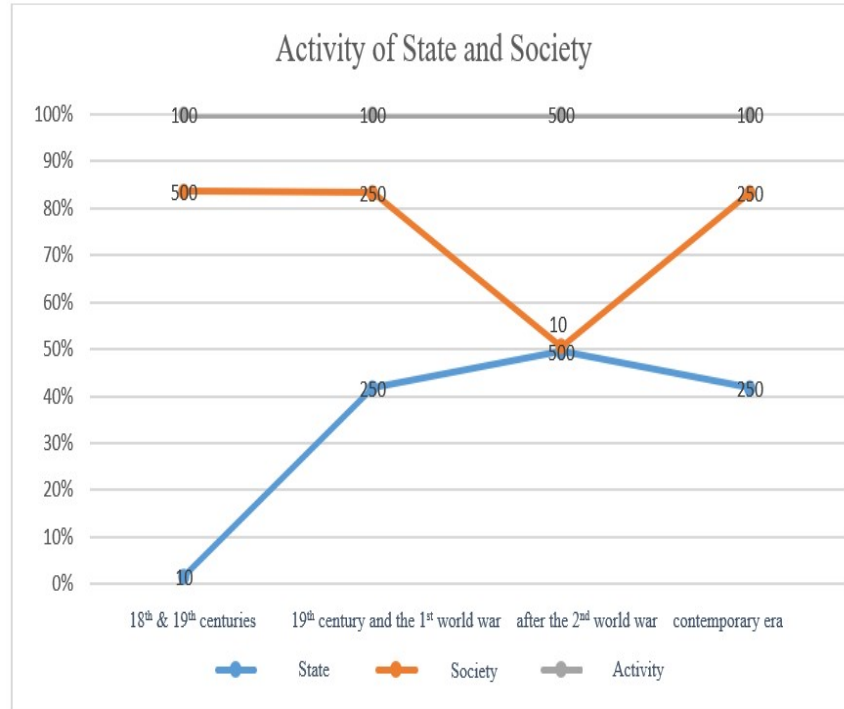
2.4. The Fourth Discourse: Active Society and Passive State (Contemporary Era)

The fourth period of discourse is a return to the original discourse, but with different conditions in which the structure of the small and neoliberal state is evolving. This era is a reaction to any kind of absolutism and totalitarianism and deals with decentralization and the negation of the intrinsic meaning that nurtures human freedom. Popper, who introduces concepts such as falsification, open, and closed society is a theorist of this period. Friedrich Hayek also considers the perception of the world based on individuals' perceptions, while order is the product of the creative mind. Society has a spontaneous order intertwined with rationality, while the power of the state over the market is limited. Leviathan is one of the thinkers who consider narratives as the product of a linguistic game. One of the most prominent theorists of this era is Habermas, who expresses the theory of communicative action and believes that humans form their actions through communication with others, according to which the relationships are intersubjective and based on mutual understanding. Nozick is also one of the late theorists of this period, who considered the minimal state to have a monopoly on the use of force and justice to be achieved in a small state in which all individuals could pursue their ideal society. In this period, the grounds for the weakening of the welfare state were associated with the economic crises on the belief that the capitalist system was willing to establish a balance, but state intervention was an obstacle. Accordingly, neoliberalism was formed, giving the

private sector a more prominent role, while the boundaries of national sovereignty were broken and the state functioned as an actor and a partner along with other actors. Social movements such as environmental, anti-weapons, etc. were also formed together with the establishment of transnational and multinational organizations, weakening the state authority.

Table 1. Four discourses in sociology

Time Period	Society	State	Dominant Theory	Theorists of Each Period
18th and 19th centuries	Active society; individual freedom; the role of social groups	Passive state; limited involvement in society	Liberalism	Hobbes, Locke, Marx, Spencer, etc.
Late 19th century to World War I	Active; cooperation of social groups and state institutions	Active; decisive impacts on society, impacts on individuals	Democracy	Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Weber, Poulantzas, Gramsci, etc.
After World War II	Passive; lack of development; independent activities of groups; individual limitations	Active; absolutism; irrational; expansion of the scope of activities	Totalitarianism	Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin
Contemporary era	Active; reemergence of social groups; tendency to individual freedoms	Active; cooperation with different social groups; allowing more activity of different groups and cooperating with them	Neo-liberalism	Popper, Friedrich Hayek, Habermas, Robert Nozick



3. Iranian Society and the Existing Discourses

1.3. Iran in the 18th and 19th Centuries: Weak State and Strong Society: Constitutional Period

Given that both state and society have to be addressed in each period, the constitutional period of Iran can be examined as the first sociological discourse. A look at the Qajar era in terms of the social and economic structure reflects methods of nomadic production, agriculture, and urban industrialism, leading to the formation of consistent and appropriate social forces based on each production method. The world capitalist system imposed its effects, and the modern elements of the commercial bourgeoisie gradually engaged in an exchange with foreign countries. The new middle class was formed at the core, and social forces were also put under the pressure of the global system, while different social groups were mobilized. Considering the Shiite culture, the society has always valued components such as independence, delegitimization of worldly rulers, resistance, and justice, leading to an empowered

society against the state and secular rulers. Besides, this period welcomed some elements of modernity discourse such as development, progress, and change, making the social structure more distinguished from the past (Moshirzadeh, 2003: 191-287). These factors together led to the formation of an unfavorable but changeable situation. Thus, different elements and groups were formed in the society, each of which had its own demands such as identity, religious, economic, political, trade union, etc. The extent of these changes and new demands, the strong leadership of this wave of liberalism, independence, the importance of individuality, etc., organized by strong religious leaders as the most influential factors in mass mobilization led to the uprising of society against the state. In such conditions, the grounds were prepared for subcultures, sub-discourses, empowering the new solidarities and weakening the old ones, the emergence of new waves such as feminism or some parties such as modernists, including pro-Western reformers and new classes, open and free activities by media and press, structural changes, the multiplicity of power resources and institutions, etc. These changes were possibly associated with different factors such as literacy, the spread of education, magazines and newspapers (such as Soraya Law, Habl-al Matin, etc.), and the publication of Persian books (travelogue of Ibrahim Beyk, Talibov, etc.) that secretly entered Iran, leading to more awareness and the formation of secret societies (Yazdan Panah, 2015: 3-6). Therefore, the society gains double power surpassing the weak state with very weak legitimacy.

The traditional patrimonial state, which was relatively independent of the social system, relied on the income of traditional sources. Corruption and relative inefficiency are the main features of such a state which is under the increasing pressure of the formation of the new interstate system and the expansion of the world capitalist system. Accordingly, the inefficiency and weakness of the state against the new society are intensified, while the sources of legitimacy are weakened, the grounds for the crisis in authority and legitimacy are provided, and vulnerability to internal pressures and inefficiency in the management or control of social and political dynamics increases (Moshirzadeh, 2003: 287-291). The constitutional state lost its legitimacy because of factors

such as Shah trips to Europe, taking heavy loans, unreasonable concessions to foreign states and sale of national interests, oppression, increased murder and looting (Brown, 1997:117), the incident of Joseph Naus, religion weakening, punishment of the sugar traders, Russian bank, small and big protests, disregard for new demands, new intellectual classes, etc., preparing grounds for the constitutional revolution. These transformations reflect the importance and growth of individualism and call for a reduction in the scope of state in the social and economic arenas. There is a strong society and a weak state in this period.

3.2. Iran in the 19th Century to World War I:

Nationalization of the Oil Industry: Mosaddegh

It can be confidently claimed that the present events in Iran have an inextricable and inevitable connection with the developments of the last 80-100 years. The complicated developments related to the overthrow of the Qajar kingdom, along with the events of the constitutionalism and the late 20th century in the country can be considered as a short period of ups and downs in Iranian history and a suitable platform for the entrance of ideal and acceptable conditions of the rule of law as well as the signs of seeking democracy for the state and society. This period starts with the late semi-modernist rule of Reza Shah Pahlavi and the developments leading to the nationalization of the oil industry in Iran.

Analysis of the events of this short historical period has clear signs and implications for the state, including the establishment of a law-abiding, incorruptible, and transparent state, the priority of national goals, a society with national and patriotic consensus and cohesion, emergence and expression of views by different elites and intellectuals, the active and decisive role of the media and political, social, and cultural groups, the decisive role in confronting foreign conspiracies to ensure and consolidate national interests and resources. This period should be considered a bright and lasting point for Iran and Iranians in the early 20th century and simultaneously with the developments in Europe and the passive society on the Green Continent.

Undoubtedly, the signs and indications of an active society and a strong and powerful state in this period, characterized as follows, are more evident than other periods in the political and social history of Iran.

1. Various political, social, and cultural components that led to the emergence of constitutionalism, the subsequent turbulent period of Reza Shah Pahlavi's rule, its gradual collapse, and the formation of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh's government. The increasing growth and awareness of various social strata, particularly the middle class, was mainly supported by national and religious leaders. There were also reactions in the context of democracy and the formation of civil society in the mentioned period.
2. Another characteristic of an active society is the presence of different groups with diverse and sometimes conflicting beliefs. This characteristic reflects a kind of democracy in the light of pluralism, providing reliable and valuable grounds for the state to pursue different goals, particularly the nationalization of the oil industry. For example, groups such as Fadā'iyān-e Islam, The Tudeh Party, a group supported by Abol-Ghasem Kashani, etc., all show the freedom of civil and social activities in this era and emphasize the activity and power of the state despite the existing conflicts.
3. Empowerment of the public opinion and political thoughts in the context of society on the one hand, and the presence of a strong middle-class with a traditional majority, on the other hand. The informed religious leaders and political and cultural figures such as Akhund Khorasani, Akhund Yazdi, Allameh Naini, and Bazargan were present at that time. Therefore, another outstanding feature of this period is the manifestation of the active society along with the active and strong state, the presence of scholars in the political, social, and cultural affairs of Iran, the presence of political figures, and non-instrumental and intellectual activities.
4. The establishment of an absolute system, the 20-year rule of Reza Shah, and the occupation of Iran by the Soviet Union and Britain had hampered the social dynamism and development. In this period, people had the desire to achieve an ideal situation, leading to state empowerment, its sovereignty, and effort for independence, freedom, and social empowerment.

5. Coordination of internal factors of society, opportunity recognition, expression of views and interests about Mosaddegh state and his own personality, the legitimacy of his personality, and his actions in sensitive global and regional conditions. This unique and effective personality strengthened the management of the national and religious current in the country. The presidency in those sensitive social conditions along with the trust of different social strata in him and his plans, and the influence of his personality on the positions of various political and economic groups and entities in the domestic and international arenas with features such as justice, honesty, incorruptibility, and importance to the middle-class should be highlighted. It should be noted that Mosaddegh had religious tendencies but was open-minded and up-to-date, reflecting the state orientations and strength in this area (Rajaei and Sarvari, 2004: 39-40).

The characteristics of Mossadegh's state as a strong state are as follows:

- Establishment of a law-abiding state
- Incorruptibility of the state
- Transparency and accountability
- Focus on national and patriotic interests
- Focus on domestic interests around the fight against foreign colonialism and domestic dictatorship
- Spreading a culture of state criticism at various social levels
- Increasing efforts to establish more freedom of the press and mass media with the aim of promoting culture (Rajaei and Sarvari, 2004: 49-52).

According to the characteristics mentioned for the active society and active state, the years related to the nationalization of the oil industry under the national state of Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh can be regarded as the active society and strong state.

3.3. Iran After World War II: Reza Shah Reign: 1921-1941

Undoubtedly, the reign of Reza Shah is a critical period in the history of Iran, with influential developments and changes in the process of society and state. This 20-year period witnessed the downward trend of progress and development in the social and

cultural fields, while the authoritarianism of Reza Shah showed an upward trend. In this period, the state was completely dictatorial and authoritarian, which tried to turn away from religious values and inclinations towards Western culture by encouraging archaic nationalism. The most important manifestation of Reza Shah's cultural policy was his inclination towards the West, achieved by the application of different tools and means. The state was in charge of economic affairs and did not grant any practical independence to institutions and corporations. Politically, the focus was on the king, who was at the head of affairs and all laws. Reza Shah passed various laws and consequently established different organizations and centers to accelerate the goal of Western modernization (Hamraz, 1997: 50). The authoritarian political system, with a tendency to European modernism, made all decisions to achieve this goal. The following can be considered among the most important measure taken by the state of Reza Shah, indicating a completely powerful state and an isolated society with a limited power:

- Imposition of illegal laws and renewal of Ministry of Justice
- Changing the type of clothing and promoting Western clothing style (Pahlavi has and fedora)
- Kashf-e hijab or banning of Islamic veils
- Establishment of modern educational organizations

Reza Shah could concentrate power and seek the separation of religion and politics through centralization of power, establishment of the army, and modern bureaucracy. The state used the army as the main pillar of its power, increasing power concentration and limiting the grounds for the emergence of other factors and resources. Hence, it is not surprising that this state opposed the formation of strong civic institutions, as they could lead to a multiplicity of centers of power and reduce the power of the king. Although Reza Shah sought modernization, he used violence as the driving force, leading to an increase in his power and the growing weakness of society.

As for the society, an authoritarian state is observed in this period based on the personal wishes of the king, who did not provide the society with any opportunities for decision-making.

Although institutions such as the Women's Association were established during this period, they were completely under the supervision of the royalty, such as Shams Pahlavi, who did not seek to empower society but pursued the goals of the authoritarian state based on Western transformations (Bamdad, 1968: 89). The Patriotic Women's League of Iran was another organization whose aim was to implement Reza Khan's policies, although it apparently sought to educate women and preserve some Islamic rights and norms, etc.

In terms of education, one of the main policies of the authoritarian state was to turn to ancient Iran and stay away from Islam, which played a central role in Iranian society because of its roots in religious values and principles. Accordingly, institutions such as the Thought Development Organization were established to unite thoughts and aspirations among the educated class (Nafisi, 1966: 18).

There were also various commissions such as music, press, speech, drama, etc., all of which aimed to change the society towards cultural patterns. During this period, Reza Shah suppressed, banned, and closed down publications and independent pro-democracy and pro-left groups. The low level of literacy, lack of information and political awareness of people and social groups, economic crises and growing poverty, severe weakness of the economic and social middle-classes, and lack of tolerance and comprehensiveness among political groups are some important characteristics of society, leading to the failure of previous constitutionalist movements (Mir Ahmadi and Jabbari Nasir, 2010: 187-189). The elites were also affiliated with the court, and communications were carried out privately and personally, which was entirely associated with the authoritarian state. The classes were also completely weak and under the control of Shah, which meant that even the middle-class were unconditionally affected by Shah policies. Therefore, the state was quite a strong revolving about the king, while the society was weak and faced with political and cultural suffocation. Accordingly, these conditions can be compared with the third sociologic discourse.

4. The Contemporary Era, Small State and Active Society

To compare and illustrate the 4th discourse in the field of society and state at the global level and analyze the condition of the society and state in contemporary Iran, a brief review of the characteristics of this period known as the fourth period, contemporary era, or active society and small state seems necessary. It was formed in 1960, simultaneous with McLuhan's idea of the global village and a decade before the Islamic revolution in Iran. This period which is referred to as the active society, the small state and the rise of neo-liberalism is characterized as follows:

- Restoration of the state-society relationships
- The growth of science and rationality
- Increasing expansion of private ownership
- Competition in the economic field and empowerment of the free market
- Modernism through the spread of the globalization which flourished in the world and in Iran during this period
- Assignment of new identities, emphasis on human-centeredness and enlightenment
- Pluralism at the society and state levels in the global, regional, and local arenas
- Good governance and qualified yet small state (Sariolghalam, 2011: 40).

A realistic analysis of the social and state transformations in Iran during the fourth discourse needs consideration of several basic and serious components which are important for better understanding the society and emerging state of Iran. Accordingly, some of the characteristics of the state and society in recent decades are first discussed.

- I. Traditionalism and anti-modernism have been the main components of the post-revolution state which sought to direct society towards the desired horizons. This can be considered as the first gap between the state and the majority of the active society of Iran, the focal point of which is summarized in the use of modern technology and abandonment of ideology. A look at the historical, social, and psychological contexts of traditionalism and anti-modernism in Iranian society confirms this claim, which is out of the scope of this paper.

II. The second characteristic is associated with the exercise of authority and legitimacy over three basic contexts and three periods of continuous and significant transformations, which were effective in the formation and occurrence of serious changes in Iranian society and can be defined as follows:

a. Charismatic sovereignty and politics from the beginning of the Islamic Revolution until 1989, the role of Ayatollah Khomeini as an influential figure in this field, strengthening his personality dimensions, establishing an emotional relationship and commitment between the leader and followers, and the effects on the state legitimacy.

b. Dominance of the traditional politics and authority between 1989 and 1997 by a large part of the state power due to the crisis of the late Iran-Iraq war and social conditions, the emphasis on the past authority, confirmation, and acceptance along with a framework of holiness with hardware effects to perform actions such as Comprehensive monitoring of citizens' private lifestyles, application of the principle of ideological selection, cultural and moral control and refinement, attack on the intellectual tradition and modernity, efforts to homogenize the living standards of the public, resistance against the manifestations of liberalism, ideological domination of the media, and emphasis on the originality of leadership (Bashiriyeh, 2003:718).

It is noteworthy that society opposed many of these actions due to the growth of public awareness. The society and state entered a new atmosphere of politics and legal authority by the withdrawal of the political system from some positions and the acceptance of the existing facts.

c. politics and legal authority since 1997 onwards, the important and prominent role of parliament and state as manifestations of legal authority, efforts to establish spontaneous, civil and democratic participation, focus on law implementation, transparency, and accountability, the gradual exit of society from populist and mass conditions whose manifestations are evident in the elections of 1997 and 2013, and also the results of the elections of the parliament and city/village councils (Bashiriyeh, 2003: 732-739). Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was an important and influential component of this period. During his 8-year presidency, the economic development, approaching the global indicators, the free market, and the competitive economy was emphasized. Also, the 8-

year period of Sayed Mohammad Khatami, his priority for political development, opening up the social atmosphere, and the role of political parties and groups in the development of society influenced this period. Khatami won the election with 80 percent of eligible voters and 70 percent of the vote, compared to only 50 percent in the previous election. Even members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and seminary students supported him, but his main supporters were in the new middle class (Abrahamian, 2015: 325). However, this paper mainly focuses on the transformations of the contemporary world and its comparative study with the post-revolution events of the state and society in Iran in the emerging areas of politics and legal sovereignty. Some of the characteristics of the state include the increasing growth of new technologies, the popularity of applied education system, the need for proper and scientific empowerment of the private sector, a foreign policy that defends the national economy, attempts to ensure freedom of expression, and thought, integration of religion and politics, proper law enforcement, protection of civil rights and freedom, and the coordinated efforts in the cultural, political and social fields concentrating on intellectual and physical modernization at various levels (Sariolghalam, 2012:36).

The main characteristic of the Islamic Revolution and the four decades after that is the rapid changes and transformations which made the society completely different and relatively active, influenced by two categories of important internal and external factors and characteristics. The efforts of elites and intellectuals in different arenas promoted the movement of the Iranian society towards an active society with serious changes. Scientific and field data also show the increasing growth of these changes and developments with the focus on the enhancement of public awareness in the light of science and rationality.

The most important external factor is the growing trend of globalization and its increasing impact on human life and activities, as well as its decisive effects on various developments and economic, political, and cultural triangles towards society. The focal logic of globalization is modernization, its set of elements, and its gradual connection to the political system and public culture. In fact, although globalization begins with economic logic, it changes into a strong social system over time, and exerts tremendous impacts on social transformations, particularly in

developing societies. Accordingly, it has affected the establishment of order in state-nation relations, easy and extensive access to data, higher levels of trust in the international environment, and acceptance of risks, whose profound effects on the Iranian society cannot be overlooked (Sariolghalam, 2012: 24-30).

The increasing growth of science and rationality in different social strata and the empowerment of rational inferential methods through myths, emotions, excitement, and face, along with separation from other traditional methods can be introduced as the most important internal factors affecting social activity over time, particularly in the present era (Jahanbegloo, 2015: 142-151). Other obvious examples include the emergence of non-state actors, changes in the old social classes and the emergence of new classes, transformations in the social contexts of the old and new middle-class forces, diverse political demands, various intellectual and social contexts of modern organizations parties, and intellectual foundations of pluralism. The influential role of elites and intellectuals in the transmission of the psychological atmosphere resulting from global transformations in various fields, the growth and increase of public awareness of Iranian society, dramatic developments in public spheres in Iran, including public places, mass media, virtual space, and social networks, and promotion of discourse and social movements should not be underestimated (Sabzehei, 2015:5). According to these explanations and analyses, it is clear that the contemporary era in the Islamic Republic of Iran can be compared to the fourth discourse, namely active society and small state.

Conclusion

It is noteworthy that when different periods are compared in Iran or any other countries from such a perspective, it is not possible to find complete consistency with the four discourses mentioned with no ups and downs in the state or society. Given the dynamism of society and politics, on the one hand, and the constant changes in the states as well as the influence of various developments, on the other hand, it is also possible to find evidence on the activity or passivity of society and state in each discourse. However, this paper has sought to examine the available and reliable written evidence using various components to provide more robust evidence. Thus, the first to the fourth periods were analyzed considering the constitutional period, the nationalization of the oil

industry under Mossadegh, the reign of Reza Shah, and the contemporary era, respectively. Table 2 provides a summary of the results.

Table 2. The four discourses in Iran

The Period	Society	State
The constitutional period	Strong, increased literacy, new demands, new classes, the wave of capitalism, the publication of books and newspapers, the creation of some new classes, new institutions	Weak state, reduced legitimacy, failure to control crisis meet the demands of the people, reduced efficiency
Mosaddegh period	Activities of various and sometimes opposition groups such as Fadā'iyān-e Islam, Tudeh Party, Kashani, etc. Freedom of the press and media, the great importance of the law Activities of the middle class and importance of all social strata and classes	Seeking to achieve and prioritize national goals Use of all different groups and strata Emphasis on the rule of law, incorruptibility, transparency, accountability, etc.
Reza Shah	Weak; formation of institutions in line with state policies; social empowerment to welcome West; distance from Islamic values; restrictions of media and press	Powerful; authoritarian; absolute; carrying out some transformations using military force; reliance on the army as the main pillar of the state; imitating the West; nationalism
Contemporary era	The growth of science and rationality The effect of the elite Globalization Growing communications Increasing awareness	Traditionalism and anti-modernism Source of different legitimacies: charismatic, authoritarian, legal Imbalance over the priority of national or Islamic interests Impossibility of activities of different groups and creating oppositions in some levels Failure to achieve some plans for growth, promotion, and sustainable development or unsuccessful plans

References

- Bammad, Badr al-Maluk (1347). **Iranian women from the constitutional revolution to the white revolution**, volume two, Tehran: Ibn Sina.
- Brown, Edward (1376). **Iran's constitutional revolution**, translator: Mehri Qazvini, Tehran, Nash Kavir.
- Saussure, Ferdinand Do (1378). **General linguistics course**, translated by Koresh Safavi, Tehran, Hermes.
- Kasraei, Mohammad Salar (1388). Lacla and Mufe's theory of discourse is an effective tool in understanding and explaining political phenomena, **Politics Quarterly**, Volume 39, Number 3, pp. 339-360.
- Rajaei, Ahmad Ali and Sarvari, Mahin (2004). **The documents speak**, first volume, Qalam Publications.
- Sadra, Muhammad (1386). Discourse theories from linguistics to political science, **Islamic Revolution Studies**, numbers 9 and 10, summer and autumn, pp. 171-208).
- Bashiriyeh, Hossein (2014). **Reason in politics**, Tehran, Shabak: Contemporary view.
- McDonnell, Diane (1380). **An introduction to the theories of discourse**, translated by Hossein Ali Nozari, Tehran, Farhang Gahdman, first edition.
- Moghadami, Mohammad Taghi (2018). Lacla and Moff's theory of discourse analysis and its critique, **Social Cultural Knowledge**, second year, second issue, Spring, pp. 124-91.
- Moshirzadeh, Hamira (2012). **Analytical framework for explaining the constitutional revolution, examining the intellectual and social foundations of constitutionalism in Iran**, Research Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies.
- Mirahamdi, Mansour and Jabari Nasir, Hassan (2009). The theoretical model of the absolute state and the emergence of the quasi-modern absolute state in Iran, **Journal of Political Science**, Year 6, Number 1, Winter, pp. 167-199.

- Nafisi, Saeed (1345). **Contemporary history of Iran from the third coup d'Esfand 1299 to Shahrivar 1320**, Tehran: Foroughi.
- Yazdan Panah, Shahnaz (2014). A review of the ups and downs of Iran's constitutional revolution (1293-1284). Available at http://www.iichs.org/PDF_files/A_Faraz.Foroud_mashrute.pdf
- Hamraz, Vida (1376). Cultural end in the reign of Reza Shah, **Contemporary History of Iran**, first year, first issue, Spring, pp. 50-63.