

Cinema and Iran's Sociopolitical changes; from its inception to the end of 2001

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ABSTRACT

That media affects and is affected by social changes is an axiom which needs no contemplation and is what naturally occurs in reality. However, the interaction between media and political developments is an issue which, in varying social situations and time periods, emerges in a variety of forms. Therefore, addressing the kind of association between sociopolitical changes and Iran's cinema developments is a problem which is of utmost significance; in that it sheds light on the place of this media in Iran. Reviewing Iran's sociopolitical changes as well as its historical developments, the present study attempted to address the socioeconomic place of cinema from its emergence to the end of 80th decade in Iran, with a documentary and comparative approach. Accordingly, given industrial nature of cinema and also by comparatively investigating developments in these two areas, the research sought to explicate on the issue on the basis of Rational Choice Theory. From this perspective, a social act is not considered rational unless the actor selects ways of achieving its goals on the basis of its beliefs as regards various social acts and possible consequences. It was revealed that in terms of its interaction with social changes, Iran's cinema resorted to passivity, silence and projection rather than addressing the issue.

Keywords: Cinema, Iran, political developments, social changes.

Introduction

A large body of studies has been conducted on Cinema of Iran (also Persian Cinema as well as Iranian Film Industry). They include Mohammad Hossein Asayesh- Typology of Cinema Audiences in Iran-Saeid Mohammadzadeh- Cinema and the Iranian Islamic Revolution; Ali Asa'die-An Introduction to the Sociology of Cinema in Iran; A'azam Ravudrad- Political Sociology of the Iranian Cinema; Armin Amir- An Examination of the Functions of Cinema in Iran, each of which has dealt with it from certain perspectives. However, what apparently has attracted great attention in scientific communities as well as

cinematic circles and perhaps has been undeniably appealing is to regard cinema as pure art, committed to society and effective on social phenomena.

Nonetheless, according to the writer of the present study, it is exactly that which causes disagreement. Is cinema really pure art? Is it inherently committed to community? And does it actually affect social phenomena? Responses to these questions might be clear-cut and obvious at the outset and/or the questioner seems to be short of knowledge. But, a moment's reflection would shed more light on the issue.

The fact is that cinema has never been and will not be pure art. As in production procedure it has been and will be dependent on capital-based instruments and heavy expenditures such as salaries, rents and, moreover, in supply cycle it has also relied on a certain system, highly bound up with capital investment, cinema has enjoyed an industrial nature from its inception. Film is a commodity created from the fusion of art and industry and, so, a filmmaker never manages to produce an artistic product without taking into account the industrial requirements and obligations as a writer, painter, singer, musician, or even a theater director does.

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To better understand the issue, assume that a film is to be produced while the filmmaker is allowed to portray what he/she wishes to and finally supply the product. What happens to the investor if box office does not bring good luck? Let's suppose that the investor overlooks his/her main capital by his/her cultural tolerance, will the filmmaker be able to, again for second and third times, attract investment for new products? If it occurs to a beginner filmmaker, he/she will leave the profession for good. Apart from that, is cinema an abstract art which individually communicates with its audience or rather is accompanied with mass presentation? It is obvious that films are always presented to the masses of audiences in movie theaters, television antennas and internet. As a consequence, should it not be considered as the mass media? Or have it not played this major role during its existence?

On the other hand, can it be with absolute certainty concluded that production and presentation of film 'A' has brought about phenomenon 'B' in the society? Or rather, phenomenon 'B' and its backgrounds, have not influenced production of film 'A' in any way? The answers are easier said than done and, furthermore, every sound person would sanction a two-way interaction between film and society rather than a uni-factor impact.

As an industry, art, and media, what is the place of cinema in society? 'Cinema is both an aesthetic as well as a social situation, the two features are interwoven'^[1]. Perhaps what grants cinema such high importance in a short period of time are its integrated artistic characteristics, empowering it to cause the audiences to identify with cinema through a dramatic story, appeal to them with visual beauties, capture their imagination by music and make them reach a belief on reality by shows. The aggregation of all these features into a frame of motion pictures is in fact a simulated reality, providing us with meaning of interwoven as mentioned previously.

This is why cinema, from its inception, has always faced with social luck, which increased its significance and power day by day. 'Among the new communication media developed in 20th century so as to achieve its perfection as an art, cinema held the highest rank'^[1]. From his ideological perspective, Adorno asserts that 'art cannot confront with reality for the cause of art. As a consequence, it turns into a false consolation'^[2]. Though it implies the art which is committed to community, this remark illustrates an overall and delicate point that rejection of art is separated from society and, moreover, that since cinema has an inherently social nature, it is involved in social reality.

As mentioned before, a plethora of studies has been carried out about cinema and the Iranian society. But, the present research attempts to investigate whether or not the Iranian social transformations have been in line with cinema's structural and content developments on one hand, and cinema with social changes on the other?

Accordingly, in doing so, a different approach from normal interpretive and discourse-oriented explanations can be adopted in this study. Using Rational Choice theory, the present study

addresses the issue as well as the two-way interaction between cinema and social changes.

Theoretical Foundations

When dealing with an issue from the perspective of Rational Choice theory, the data is collected and analyzed in accordance with three approaches including Decision theory, Game Theory, and Collective Action Theory.

From this perspective, a social action is deemed to be rational when an agent chooses the best and closest ways to achieve objectives by acting upon his/her beliefs as regards varying methods of social action and possible consequences. Here, concepts like preference and benefit are taken into account and an individual makes the choice based on this framework. In the present study, the explanations are provided in accordance with strategic rationality-based decision-making.

In the following, two main players in cinema's art and industry; that is, producer and government, which possess the greatest influence in mutual interactions, are addressed based on Decision Theory frameworks. Strategic rationality is a part of rational choice, the consequences of which depend on intentional choice of decision-makers of other factor. In the area of strategic rationality, the profit an individual earns relies on choice made by other players. Consequently, here every player should take account of others' rational calculations and chooses what maximizes his/her interest by assuming that other players make rational choices as well. Thus, in this method, Expected Utility rule does not generate any profit, and so, the use should be made of Utility Maximization rule^[3].

Cinema in Iran

Great and intense debates have been conducted among philosophers and art experts with regard to the origins of art. Some believe it is originated from instinct, varying from construction instinct to sexual one, while others hold that it is the result of need. An arts expert called Hiren, asserts that arts were initially required to satisfy physical needs. It is obvious that man's desire for beauty has been effective on the origins of art. Nonetheless, as this social institute lives on and grows, it is the art creator's pursuing a rational goal that justifies it. One of the justifications introduced in this area is the role of art in conveying messages for other human beings, gods, and mythological forces^[4].

Cinema is, however, a combined art which came into existence over the last century alongside developments in painting, photography, music, literature, theater as well as efforts made by Brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière. At the outset, the phenomenon was regarded as a novel industrial invention capable of presenting motion pictures like what actually happens in reality. When faced with this bizarre phenomenon, the first film viewers were impressed by the effect of virtual reality to the extent that they escaped from the front of a picture showing an approaching train. Mozaffar ad-Din Shah writes about his observation of cinematograph as 'a device projected on the wall

while people move in it' ^[5]. Gradually by emergence of story literature and birth of storyteller cinema, new potentials of this phenomenon demonstrated themselves. Now, not only did cinema have the potential for producing virtual reality in a documentary format but it also could step into theaters and sales market through its influence, pervasiveness, and possibility of rapid proliferation. It was the beginning of establishing group relationships and producing wealth by virtue of motion picture. But, how did the phenomenon work its way in Iran? 'In 1900, cinema entered into Iran by Qajar Shah, after 4 years exited from palace as well as the nobility houses, and little by little exhibited itself among other reality' ^[6]. Cinema was brought to Iran nearly 5 years after its invention and, as a consequence, when camera came into Mozaffar ad-Din Shah's royal palace, it turned into a tool for kingly mirth as put forth by Farrokh Ghaffari, a leading figure in cinema of Iran:

'It was courtiers, noblemen, and elders who watched films through projectors at the time. They were those who took cinematograph of court to their homes on occasions like wedding, circumcision, and other ceremonies and saw French comic films, brought to Iran from Russia, that is, contrary to other parts of the world where cinema became a device for public entertainment and was exhibited under tents and/or bazaars, in Iran it was a royal art' ^[5].

It took several years (1905) until the first theater was established at Tehran Cheraq Gaaz (literally Gas Lamp) street with efforts of 'Mirza Ebrahim Khan Sahhafbashi'. However, it is better to say it was a corridor with several Kinetoscopes (something like peep show) and almost one year later the first public theater was founded in Iran by 'Mahdi Evonoff (Mahdi Rousi Khan)'.

After that, the first Iranian story film called '*Abi and Rabi*', the first Iranian sound film named '*Lor Girl*', and the first professional filmmaking studio were produced and established by Ovanes Ohanian, Abdolhossein Sepanta and Esmail Koushan in 1931, 1934, and 1948, respectively, marking the start of Iran's cinema ^[7].

Changes in socioeconomic structure of Iranian cinema and the origins of producers¹

1- State-run Cinema (1900 to 1905):

In fact, the first producer of Iranian cinema was Mozaffar ad-Din Shah. As government was summarized in the Shah itself, it treated this modern phenomenon like it did to other ones, recording astounding capabilities of cinema in its royal Treasure House.

Cinematograph, one of the tools for Qajar Shah's entertainment, recorded what he desired; as an example, Shah ordered Mirza Ibrahim Khanto 'come and shoot a cluster of people in Muharram Mourning' or somewhere else 'come and film our lions at the zoo' ^[5]. In the same period, a number of courtiers even made efforts to produce story films as well as to record pond-board

shows (performed in Iran, it was a kind of entertaining show, in which a wooden board was put on house ponds where the show was performed). But, contrary to these attempts, to courtiers cinematograph was seen as only a source of entertainment.

2- Initial Producers (1905 to 1934):

cinema entered into the public realm, but, its cultural and economic capabilities were still unknown. As a consequence, theaters experienced a growing trend at the outset as to reveal economic attractions of cinema. Due to equating him with the Iranian Constitutional Revolutionaries, Mirza Ebrahim Khan Sahhafbashi's Kinetoscopes corridor didn't last for even a month and was closed, resulting in his leaving Iran. Then, it was the turn of Rousi Khan's public theater. It, too, didn't survive for a long time as the public theater was plundered during conflicts between Mohammad Ali Shah and Constitution Revolutionaries and, moreover, he himself fled abroad. After him, it was 'Ardeshir Khan Armeni' who introduced the real meaning of running and using cinema, continuing until long after him ^[7].

As theater flourished, mostly screening foreign films, its economic and cultural appeal attracted a number of people to the area of production. The first efforts were made by 'Khan Baba Motazedi' through preparing documentaries concerning Reza Shah coronation and so on, bringing him foreign customers. Afterwards, cooperating with Kahn Baba Motazedi, Ovanes Ohanian produced the first Iranian silent story film called '*Abi and Rabi*' with a Danish pattern in a comic format in 1934. The film met warm reception. Then, several other films were produced by him as well as some other beginners ^[5].

3- Professional Producers (1934 to 1947):

in 1934, the first Iranian sound film, '*Lor Girl*' by Abdolhossein Sepanta, was prepared through efforts made by Iranian residents of India. Audiences' warm reception of the film more revealed economic output of cinema. It should be noted that the audiences so rapturously received the film that Sepanta produced 7 ones during two years of 1934 to 1935. However, as stated by Sepanta, to guarantee the sale of their movies, Americans prohibited the Iranian story films until 1947, before which time hardly any movie was produced except for some documentary ones ^[5].

4- Local Producers (1947 to 1963):

in 1947, the technology for producing sound films was brought to Iran, causing cinema industry to thrive to the extent that during some years even up to 100 to 150 movies were prepared and screened.

At the late 1921s, by '*Siavash dar Takht-e Jamshid*' (Siavash in Persepolis), state cinema entered the area again. But, this time not for using it as an entertainment tool, rather, to spread kingly intentions in the cinema format ^[8].

5- Private and State Investment (1963 to 1978):

as state capital was injected in film business, products were prepared that expected no economic output. This process, which from that time onwards has been continually maintained in Iranian cinema industry, was effective on avant-garde wave of Iranian cinema (1969) save '*Qeysar*' film.

¹ What is meant by Producer is in fact its cinematic definition; that is, investor, rather than television version

Nonetheless, in 1978 as the Iranian Revolution led to victory, cinema phenomenon faced severe state restrictions, continuing up until 1999. It was because cinema was garaged into corruption and deviation, which was partly included in policies of the former government (Pahlavi) ^[9].

6- Quasi-Governmental Cinema (1996 to 1999):

film production experienced serious limitations in this period. The necessity of approving screenplay prior to production by private sector, evaluating after production as well as increasing state investment in cinema sector all began with the aim of promulgating objectives of the Iranian Revolution. During this period, rise in governmental investments with a cultural approach compatible with the Revolution values was generally in conflict with the profit-oriented attitude towards cinema. It was the main difference in investments between this period and previous ones ^[8].

7- Revival of Non-governmental Cinema (1998 up to the present time):

with the rise of Reformist government as well as infant politics, of whom filmmakers were a part, restrictions were lifted and placed only on post-production evaluations, governmental investments decreased and finally private sector was revived ^[10].

The Iranian sociopolitical changes from 2000 to 2010

Since 2000 up until 2010, Iran has undergone a plethora of ups and downs in political, social as well as economic areas. The processes have been sometimes so transforming that they exerted considerable influence on all social and cultural aspects.

1- 1906 Constitutional Movement of Iran:

perhaps, the roots of Constitutional Movement date back to Tobacco Movement (Tobacco Protest). But, the movement formally succeeded in this year.

2- 1921 Persian Coup to 1926 Coronation:

overthrow of Qajar dynasty and rise of Reza Shah and Zia'eddin Tabatabaee, which resulted in establishment of Pahlavi Dynasty.

3- World War II and Reza Shah's Forced Abdication 1935 to 1941:

with the outbreak of World War II, Iran declared its neutrality at the outset. Nevertheless, Allied forces occupied Iran at late years of the war, leading to Reza Shah's forced abdication.

4- The Nationalization of the Iran Oil Industry Movement 1951 to 1953:

the Iranian society was in serious conflicts at both domestic and international levels in this period, continuing to 1953 Iranian coup d'état.

5- Stability and Obstruction from 1953 to 1963:

after the previously mention coup, Mohammad Reza Shah aimed to forcefully concentrate the power in monarchy institute. But, due to foreign pressure, the atmosphere of obstruction was lifted.

6- The Explosion of Social Forces 1963 to 1978:

during the 10 years when stability and security were the government's main priority and it was possible to suppress any

opposition, social forces were formed and accumulated, suddenly unleashed in 1996 ^[11].

7- The Initial Conflicts until Political Stability from 1980 to 1996:

even though the former political system was annihilated during these years, a pervasive community had not yet been established among forces taking part in the revolution. With the outbreak of the Imposed War (the Holy Defense, or Iran-Iraq War) this instability led to domestic unity and stability.

8- Sociopolitical Stability from 1980 to 1989:

under Imam Khomeini's charismatic authority and unity resulted from the war, political stability, encompassing Islamic-Revolutionary values discourse, was present in this period.

9- Pseudo-modern Authoritarianism from 1989 to 1997:

during this period, because of the government's authoritarian policies and behaviors, social demands were formed and accumulated at varying levels and aspects.

10- Passive Reformism from 1997 to 2005:

the reformist movement, a reaction to inappropriate interactions with society prior to its 8-year period, managed to gain dominance by virtue of presenting ideals. However, it practically had a superficial collision with the existing structures, the most obvious case was avoiding economic reforms ^[12].

11- Eclectic Populism from 2005 to 2010:

during these years, the government's theoretical poverty, disorganized and unfocused policies, fruitless and vain commutes of officials, and resorting to populism in all political, social, cultural as well as economic aspects, caused undesirable effects (the writer's observations).

The Iranian sociopolitical changes, cinema developments, and mutual interactions

From the perspective of producers and government, the approach to cinema adopted by each in the course of Iran's sociopolitical developments is addressed here on the basis of Rational Choice theory framework. Basically, in his/her rational choice, the decision-maker would make the choice that, in accordance to his/her belief, would bring benefit.

Producers:

As the court held monopoly on cinema during 1902 to 1905 when, as a consequence, there were no producer and distributor except for the court itself, cinema played role in what it was supposed to offer benefits; that is, entertaining the kingly court. Nevertheless, it underwent a change as cinema entered into society in 1905.

Both Constitution-seeking Sahhafbashi and/or monarchy-seeking Rousi Khan began to found theaters and screened foreign comic short films. The process continued even after them and such films were often screened. However, the common point about all these efforts has been investments for broadcasting machines as

well as receiving a particular amount of money from audiences (making profit).

From 1932 when the first Iranian story film was produced and warmly received onwards, producers' decisions based on Utility Maximization rule is conspicuous. In '*Abi and Rabi*', Ovanes Ohanian used a cinema technique called template film, in which the filmmaker adopts a previously produced film and reproduce it. 'The film (*Abi and Rabi*) was directly inspired by Danish comic couple (Pat & Patachon). Iranian had seen the couple many times in cinemas and, so, they adored them' [5]. Selecting this film was due to the fact that the producer sought a guarantee to minimize the risks of his investment; hence choosing a pre-tested template, i.e. the Danish film. In this way, not only was the least loss expected but also success was highly likely. The approach employed by Ohanian was maintained to the arrival of sound cinema.

After Ohanian, Abdolhossein Sepanta made a similar choice and produced an Iranian copy (*Lor Girl*) of Indian cinema's permanent and successful components. Moreover, as the film enjoyed the advantage of being a sound one, it stepped into the realm of Iran's film show. The success of *Lor Girl*, which attracted Iranian audiences, more encouraged Sepanta to produce some romance dramas or Iranian history films with an Indian style. During 2 years, he produced more than 7 films with the same structure. With the outbreak of World War II, or perhaps as quoted by Sepanta, due to 'the America's warning to decrease Iranian film production', this industry moved into recession, revealing the first vulnerability of cinema to sociopolitical crises. In this historic period except for several obsolete documentaries in cinema of Iran, there was no trace of Constitutional Movement, 1921 Persian Coup (Black Coup), Qajar overthrow, nor was any trace of the rise of Reza Shah, confirming our assumption regarding investor's rational choice, as possible risky investment would be the prohibition of films.

During 1935 to 1947, there was not any short film in Iran and, moreover, even few documentaries were produced by virtue of foreigners [5]. This recession-laden period indicates despite the fact that film producers could continue producing films abroad even under worst conditions-occupation of Iran-, of two choices, i.e. production and possibility of investment loss as well as no production and preserving investment, they made the latter. Masoud Mehrabi, in *The History of the Iranian Cinema*, confirms it: 'if other art and communicative activities, particularly literature, could have sometimes turned a blind eye to censorship and have not feared that they might be prohibited, by relying on huge financial investments, cinema dared not take the risk which would bankrupt producers' [13].

In 1947, as the equipment needed for production of sound film were brought into Iran, the first Iranian sound film called '*Toofan e Zendegi*' (literally, Storm of Life) was produced. The film was based on the previously mentioned framework; using a guaranteed Indian drama, in which a poor boy falls in love with a rich girl, as its template, becoming the cornerstone of 'Persian Film' famous category.

Persian film production process with visual elements, story staff, and a repetitive cinematic structure continued until 1963. Nevertheless, during this period, there was no trace of The Nationalization of the Iran Oil Industry Movement, 1953 Iranian coup d'état, and Shah's commutes. 'The fact is that contrary to literature and theater that reflected people's ideals and aspirations at the time, cinema did not manage to take any steps in this regard' [8].

Stabilized conditions, cinematic production and broadcast equipment, as well as increases in value added of the industry's productions caused investors to change their Utility Maximization rule to Expected Utility rule (Bayes 'theorem'), in which decision-maker no longer seeks to reduce loss risks. Rather, he/she pursues maximum utility (profit). Producers' pursuit of highest profit rates confirms it:

From 1956 onwards, America and Europe-made porn movies shown in cinemas of Tehran and other cities became a public issue. 1921 was the peak decade for Iranian star actresses who were at the center of events in most films. 1953 can be regarded as the start of the rule of dance and song over Iranian cinema [14].

Nevertheless, in 1963, Iranian cinema experienced an event, the impacts of which prevailed even after the revolution. It was reentry of government into cinema; this time with the aim of following the government's cultural policies. Costly films such as '*Siavash at Persepolis*' are formal examples of employing cinema to pursue ideological objectives of the government at that time, repeated again for many times.

Perhaps it was the resultant of cinema approaches to the government's social values and official policies that brought about attacks on Ministry of Culture and several cinemas [8].

Up to 1969 when cinema of Iran experienced a great and unbelievable shock by *Gheysar*, no other considerable and significant event can be named except for different state-supported films such as '*Shab-e Quzi*' (literally: Night of the Hunchback), '*Adobe and Mirror*', '*Ahou's Husband*' and so on. Nonetheless, it should be noted that *Gheysar* was a phenomenon which was financed by a private sector investor and finally exploded like a bomb, defying the odds. In fact, it was the only Iranian cinema film that did not followed pre-guaranteed templates and, however, hit the jackpot. Masoud Kimiai in this film revealed his brilliance and skills at persuading the investor, who had undoubtedly had knowledge of appealing and box office-oriented elements as well. After this case, cinema added an ignorant category to its list, plus the previously stated patterns.

Having said that, it was not the only message producers received from highly profitable *Gheysar*. At the core of this film laid an enormous concept of rebellion against governing principle; a concept soon turning into one of the elements appealing to investor. '*Tangna*' (literally; Stalemate, deadlock), '*Tangsir*' (Tight Spot) as well as Kimiai's blunt production; '*The Deers*', all employed this attractive element.

In the same year, two other films; '*Gaav*' (The Cow) and '*Tranquility in the Presence of Others*', were produced with a motif

based on objection to the status quo. Later, they were conceived of as leaders of Iranian New Wave Cinema. But strange is that they no longer attract private sector support and are produced by virtue of direct governmental budget.

By the Iranian Revolution, producer's decision-making rule was still the same Expected Utility one, and, furthermore, cinema by gathering all its profit-laden elements, from *Ganj-e Qarun* (literally, Qarun Treasure) to *Sex* and Gheysar-like rebellion, made decisions in its productions. But, conveying rebellion message finally posed major problems to it.

With the outbreak of Iranian Revolution, due to various belief-related and political reasons, cinema became the target of fierce attacks both during revolutionary conflicts and after its victory. Nevertheless, just one month after the revolution succeeded, theaters were reopened; a process accompanied by gradual removal of pre-revolution's cinematic elements, close governmental supervision and so on^[8].

From this time onwards, film production, whether by government or private sector, was subject to confirmation of script, staff, sample makeup photo, etc^[15]. Farabi Cinema Foundation was established to guide and supervise the country's cinema and also considerable amount of budget was poured into state-run cinema sector. Nonetheless, industrial nature of cinema finally subjugated this policy.

In these conditions, to continue its economic activities, the producer had no other options but to literally solve a multivariable equation, in which any error would result in its prohibition, bankruptcy, or threatened job prospects. Consequently, the producer's decision-making rule returned to the same conservative Utility Maximization one.

With the outbreak of war in 1980, more dogmatism was imposed on supervision and guiding of cinema. Hence, of popular elements, producers lost erotic elements, dance and sing, violence and many of the previously mentioned factors. Accordingly, they presented products encompassing subjects like family, social tragedies, police conflicts, pre-revolution struggles, and so on. *'The Imperiled'* was at the vanguard of this movement.

Interestingly, even at the time of war, non-government sector was reluctant to address the issue of war and works related to it's a consequence, state-run sector took on this responsibility as well as similar duties. After the war and emergence of Construction Government authoritarian technocrats, former policies were pursued as a form of sloganeering. Some of the filmmakers figured out that they could make more use of state assistance or gain more freedom by virtue of sycophantic sloganeering; which turned out to be effective though. Examples included the return of pre-revolution cinema staff like Iraj Ghaderi. The procedure continued to the end of Construction period.

Afterwards, with emergence of political changes and Reformist movement in 1997, cinema was freed from many imposed restraints, script confirmation was replaced with screening license, and many of the authorities of authoritarian Farabi institute was removed. But, it seemed that the economic flair of producers awaited the change and that they set issues like earthly

love, political dissidence and yearning for pre-revolution period, which formerly were considered red lines, as their work subjects. The technique of creating cinema stars, previously condemned, was substituted for producing mass cinema stars.

After some time, although reformist discourse waned, the producer conceived of existing changes as a box office-oriented (profitable) element. It should be noted that no one entered this area save cases such as *Under the City's Skin* and *Born Under Libra* (Original title: *Motevalede Mahe Mehr*). Not being concerned about this drop, the producer again adopted Expected Utility rule, however this time slowly and with caution. He/she had explored new methods in his/her working path and could add elements like prohibition, prohibition lifting and cautious political comic to all profitable ones.

The same procedure was maintained after reformist government and with the arrival of current populist discourse. In such an atmosphere, producers took advantage of fluctuations in policies and politicians' ambition to stay powerful. At first, the producer approaches controversial subjects with caution while as he/she gradually identified the government's behavioral pattern, stepped towards subjects which were not thought about before such as *Gashte Ershad* (Guidance Patrol). Likewise, lifting prohibitions on films such as *Fire Keeper*, which blatantly satirized religious and traditional belief, was derived from the same pattern.

Government as the producer and supervisor

As mentioned before, the entry of government into cinema investment dates back to the late 1950s. The policy originated from the government's strong tendency to propagate its norms. In doing so, Ministry of Culture, Institute for the Intellectual Development, Documentary and Experimental Film Centre (DEFC), Pahlavi Foundation and so on could provide assistance to these filmmakers. But why?

Governmental investor does not expect to gain profit, but instead, to spread his/her cultural norms. Prior to the revolution, these values encompassed abstract intellectual non-Marxist norms or expanding ancient-oriented thoughts whereas after it they included spreading religious values, disclosing the nature of Pahlavi regime, and developing values concerning the Holy Defense.

In both pre- and post-revolution periods, not only did government investment in this area present bankrupted formalist products masquerading as open-minded but it also yielded even converse results. Films such as *'The Cow'* and *'Tranquility at the Presence of Others'* not only did not match with values of political regime but they were also in contrast with each other. Likewise, after the revolution, government centralization and its resulted investments either was spent on inefficient war film series or collecting Tarkovsky's eclectics and passive quasi-mysticism such as *Pomegranate and Cane*. On the other hand, it in its most significant cases introduced the phenomenon of Makhmalbaf.

However, in recent years as other institutes entered into the area of government investment in cinema, it seems that governmental approach has accepted cinema's inherent characteristic of economic output and is following this path. During these years,

not only are films like *Ekhrajiha* (the Outcast) and *The Golden Collars* produced but they also yield high output.

Conclusion

Based on what has previously been mentioned it can be obviously concluded that since its birth the cinema of Iran has pursued an economic procedure in accordance with its economic aspects. Accordingly, it has also painted a preference-based trend, whose first priority has been to preserve the main invested capital. In development and growth process of this industry, the art of this approach has been followed on the basis of two rules; Maximizing Rational choice and Expected Utility.

A comparison of the subjects of political, social, and historical changes and developments in cinema of Iran clearly indicates that in nearly no certain time period has cinema entered into the social transformations as it did in some countries such as Greek. Examples such as occupation of Iran, developments in 1951s, the Iranian Revolution, war and their distance from cinema sheds light on the issue.

Nonetheless, few activities performed by some committed-to-society filmmakers should not be confused with the totality of cinema. Such activities have faced with many difficulties until they achieved favorable results.

Therefore, it can be accepted that as regards the interaction of cinema with social changes, instead of directly dealing with the issue, the cinema of Iran has mostly attempted to resort to passivity, silence, or projection. However, on the contrarily, such changes have always had a certain and sometimes deep impact on cinema.

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