

Title:

***Socio-Cultural and Socio-Political Implications
of VCRs in Iran:
Public Discourses, State Policies, and Cultivation of Attitudes***

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

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Abstract

Title:

***Socio-Cultural and Socio-Political Implications of VCRs in Iran:
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Abstract: This study looks at the implications of Video Cassette Recorders in Iran at national and individual levels. By 'contextualising' the medium, the audiences, the text, and relevant state policies within the dynamic environment of post-revolutionary Iran, the research questions the VCRs definition, functions, and impacts. The first part describes and explains issues related to the VCRs' critical existence in Iran: factors of VCRs' penetration; government reaction toward its increasing penetration; the complex reasons behind the banishment of video sets and video clubs in 1983; consequences of the 1983 prohibition policy; VCRs' underground life in Iran between 1983-1993; the dominant anti-VCR discourse of 1983-1993 period; the effects of the VCR on other social organisations and institutions and in particular its impact on cinema and broadcast media; the debates which lead to VCRs' legalisation in 1993; and development of a centralised organisation of VCR since 1994.

The second part at the familial and individual level questions the 'effects' of VCRs on specific attitudes, expectations, and behaviour of the Iranian youth. For this purpose the role of some VCR-related (e.g., ownership, viewing intensity, content preferences, audience activity, and parental control) as well as non-VCR-related factors (i.e., class, gender, and age) in the (trans)formation of traditional/non-traditional attitudes are studied.

This survey tests hypotheses relate to: the VCR's class-based diffusion in Iran; its use patterns by the audiences; its impact on the audiences' uses of national media; the impacts of length of VCR ownership; the role of the video sets and cassettes in cultivation of (selected non-traditional) attitudes; cultivation relativity across various age and gender groups and classes; and the role of preferred content types, audience activities as well as parental control methods on the amount of cultivation.

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*to my beloved parents
Asgar and Robabeh
and
to the memory of my cousins
Yavar Koravi and A'la' Koravi
-Martyrs of freedom
and
independence*

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List of Abbreviations

Betamax, and VHS	video recording formats
DBS(s)	Direct Broadcasting Satellite(s)
FCF	Farabi Cinema(tic) Foundation
ICAPIRI	Index of Cultural Articles in the Publications of the Islamic Republic of Iran
IPO	Islamic Propagation Organisation
HCCR	High Council of Cultural Revolution
IRC	Islamic Revolutionary Committees
IRC-BPVPS	Islamic revolutionary Committees' Bureau for Promotion of Virtue & Prevention of Sin
IRG	Islamic Revolutionary Guards
IVM	Institute of Visual Media
MCIG	Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance
MCIG-CD	Cinema Deputy of Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance
MCIG-GOCRR	General Office for Cinematic Relations & Research; affiliated to the MCIG-CD
MNG	Ministry of National Guidance
NICTs	New Information & Communication Technologies
NIFA	National Iranian Film Archive (<i>Film-Khane-ye Melli-ye Iran</i>)
NIR	National Iranian Radio
NIRT	National Iranian Radio & Television
NITV	National Iranian Television
OPVPS	Office for Promotion of Virtue & Prevention of Sin (<i>Daye're-ye 'Amr be Ma'roof va Nah'-ye az Mon-kar</i>)
PAL, SECAM, & NTSC	broadcasting systems
SAVAK	<i>Sazeman-e Et'tela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvari</i> (National Information & Security Organisation of Pahlavi era)
SCG	Syndicate of Cassette & Gramophone [Distributors]
SDCPs	Shops for Distribution of Cultural Products
SPDDPVC	Syndicate for Production, Distribution, and Duplications of Permitted Video Cassettes
VCR(s)	Video Cassette Recorder(s)
VTR(s)	Video Tape Recorder(s)
VVIR	Voice & Vision of the Islamic Republic [of Iran]

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Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter is designed to present a preliminary exposition of this research. The chapter starts with an explanation of the problematic research subject. Then, the structure of the research, general characteristics of the two parts of the research and structure of this thesis are discussed.

Explanation of the Problem

During the turbulent decades of the 1980s and 1990s, one of the most dynamic features of the life of individuals as well as collectivities has been that of new information and communication technologies (NICTs, hereafter). In a relatively short period, enormous changes have occurred in economic, political, social and cultural spheres at national and international levels. New improvements in the production, transmission, distribution and consumption of mass media content and information have raised different questions. These developments have also reinforced the older problematic issues which were inherited from the previous decades. The multidimensional consequences of the new developments in the sphere of media and information have invited scientists, politicians, media practitioners, social activists and even the ordinary audiences/consumers to an unprecedented level of involvement.

Since the early 1970s, the combined processes of transnationalisation and informationalisation, along with a continuous expansion of media channels and diversification of available media content, have raised fundamental questions for all societies. These questions are related to societal as well as individual issues. At the national and international levels the issues of cultural independence or domination and subordination have become legitimate questions. The extended inequalities between various countries in their control of the global media production and content flows have

put the media-poor, consumer nations in a problematic situation. These nations are facing additional difficulties in preserving their indigenous cultural identities. Similarly, the communications media-related inequalities between different politico-economic classes or ideological/cultural groups within any given country have given new dimensions to the historical ideals of human kind; equality, freedom and right of self-determination. These issues resulted in conflicts (debates and counter-debates) over a 'new world information order' and issues related to national and international media policies. Nevertheless, it is vital to note that the increasing importance of the contemporary mass-media-related issues arise from the fact that the new technologies have expanded the potential of the conventional media beyond their perceived boundaries. Nowadays, the domination of world cultures by media/cultural productions of a few media rich nations is no longer an 'unimaginable' (at least futuristic) scenario. On the other hand, many more nations are able to produce their own media 'content.' However, contemporary questions which result from the development of mass communications technologies are to some extent different for the developing (media-) poor countries from those of the globally powerful and especially the media-rich ones.

Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs) possess a special position among the new communication technologies. In less than two decades since its very first appearance in the markets in 1976, VCR has gained the position of being known as a very innovative and even 'revolutionary' medium throughout the world. The omniscient presence and rapid penetration of the VCRs generated new fears and/or hopes and, therefore, it encouraged opposite beliefs and theories. VCR creates new conditions for the functions of conventional mass media, it changes audiences' media usage, and through these changes, it imposes new policy initiatives on the cultural and political strategies of nations in the realm of mass media. The actual impact of VCRs vary depending on their use patterns and the context wherein they are being used. VCR technology, however, generate or reinforce changes in areas related to media systems and content; broadcasting and even general cultural policies; the forms and functions of some of the societal organisations and institutions; and more importantly, media habits, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the audience. The vitality of this impact is more evident when the diversity of video content which people view through VCRs is more different from what they are used to watch on conventional controlled media channels. In this sense,

VCR decentralises and personalises media usage and, therefore, destroys the formal and informal control of governments and other social institutions. This is a major impact since states were using the conventional mass media as influential means of their political and cultural policies.

The VCR has experienced a turbulent and peculiar life in Iran. At the time of the VCR's global development and home penetration from the mid-1970s, Iran was experiencing a revolutionary turmoil which resulted in creation of an Islamic Republic. The new regime relied on traditionalism and particularly the notion of politically active Islam. One of the strongest motors of the Revolution, which eventually guided the policies of the revolutionary government, was the idea of the cultural injuries of the people and the clergy caused by the previous regime's cultural and media tastes and projects. The pre-revolutionary Iranian mass media were dominated by Western, specifically American, programmes. These cultural products, along with the regime's favourite domestic ones, were considered as outrageous, anti-Islamic, and pro-Western. The clergy insisted that they were destroying the cultural purity and national identity of Muslim Iran. Therefore, possibly the greatest demand of the revolution was to re-capture the cultural domain, communication channels, and production and introduction of 'pure, authentic, and popular Shi'a culture'.

This research deals with the life of the VCR technology in the particular environment of post-revolutionary Iran during the 1980s and 1990s. It will show that the VCR's life in Iran differed from that in many other countries. However, this study will also show the similarities between the 'Iranian VCR phenomenon' with other countries and in particular the Third World and the Middle Eastern Muslim nations. I have divided and studied the issues related to the existence of VCRs in Iran into two interrelated levels: national/institutional as well as individual/familial levels. This bi-focal research structure as well as theoretical and methodological characteristics of the relevant sections are discussed here.

Structure of the Research

Here, I provide an introduction on the structure of the research before explaining the characteristics of the two sections. This study aims to look at the actual impact of

the VCR technology on Iranian society and audiences. In order to do this, it tries to 'measure' the 'effects' of the video content on Iranian adolescents' perceptions and behaviour. This is done by attempting to 'contextualise' the medium, the audiences, and the text within the dynamic environment of post-revolutionary Iran. It is believed that an understanding of the subjective (ideological) as well as objective factors -which shaped the political, cultural, economic, and military characteristics of the post-revolutionary Iranian state and society- is crucial if a meaningful evaluation of the quantitative data is required.

I agree, as one may rightfully argue, that covering such a range of issues relevant to the multidimensional phenomenon of VCR technology is an ambitious task. This is certainly true within the limitations of a piece of doctoral academic research. There are reasons for such a strategy which stem from the situation that I, as researcher and author, have faced from the outset.

The prohibition of the VCR in Iran between 1983-93 meant that VCR officially became forgotten as a 'topical' issue. This meant, among other things, that research on all relevant areas was non-existent in Iran. For more than a decade, all governmental organisations -which carry out the bulk of research in cultural and mass media fields- did not initiate or support any study mainly or even marginally on VCR-related subjects. This situation, which was exacerbated by the general revolutionary turmoil and the state of war in the country, resulted in an absolute neglect of the issues inclusively covered by the current research. As a result, the only sources available on VCRs' life inside Iran are articles from periodicals and daily newspapers. These articles are mainly polemical texts produced for mass consumption as the cornerstone of the (semi-)official campaign against the existence and expansion of video sets and cassettes inside Iran.

Lack of accurate research data, on the one hand, and the diversity and depth of issues related to two decades of VCRs' life in Iran, on the other hand, necessitated (and persuaded the researcher to adopt) a broad strategy. Furthermore, it seems logical to suggest that a proper combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can create a more reliable picture of the phenomenon under study here. Obviously, such a combination becomes more than a simple necessity when dealing with the multidimensional interrelationships between the subject matters of social sciences.

Focusing on VCR's impact on Iranian audiences does not 'mean' much if it is not placed within the 'history' and socio-politico-cultural 'context' of contemporary Iran. Such a combination seems appropriate for studying VCRs' impact within the Iranian context.

It is also worth noting that VCR, as a relatively new technology, is a less known field and there is a global need for factual data as well as for theorisation. The relative global shortage of academic work on the VCR and the lack of accurate data on Iran have required a broad and thus less restricted research approach. Having explained this, I now move to discuss the characteristics of the two sections of this research.

Section One

This section is a case study of VCR-related policies in Iran. It relies on the print materials as its main source of data; research reports, governmental reports as well as news and articles printed in the newspapers and magazines from the early 1980s until mid-1995. The references (around 400 titles) have been collected using available archives and libraries of various universities, research organisations, and publications. In the analysis, techniques of document and discourse analyses have been employed where appropriate. However, no specific discussion is devoted to the methodological notes of this section and relevant methods, techniques and considerations are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 -though mainly in footnotes.

Section One employs an underlying theme: 'a clash between two Revolutions'. It is an intellectually tempting theme to view the VCR's life in, and impact on, Iranian society and state policies as an example of the ongoing encounter between the dynamic revolution of New Information and Communications Technologies (NICTs) and the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. Ironically, both revolutions occurred almost simultaneously in the 1970s, reached their zenith in the 1980s and continue to baffle the world in the 1990s. Both these revolutions have been crucial and critical 'global events' which -although independent- have ushered the world into the age of globalisation. Both have primarily been concerned with the cultural/emotional/cognitive spheres of life of the individual and societies within their relevant *locales*, but they have both had far-reaching political, economic, and militaristic implications throughout the world. This, however, does not necessarily imply a resistance from the side of the Islamic Revolution

(and the Islamic Republican regime) against the technological advances in the field of communications media. In fact, as it will be discussed in the following chapters, the Islamic Republic has appreciated the technological developments but has shown severe agitation against the subsequent penetration of diversified and uncontrolled media content mainly produced in the West.

Based on this underlying thesis, Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the revolution of NICTs and the Islamic Revolution of Iran, respectively. Chapter 2 provides a brief review of the existing literature on the creation of the revolution of NICTs and the coming of the 'Information Society'. Designed to provide a theoretical background for the national level analysis in this research, this chapter starts with a brief discussion of the revolutionary impact of the NICTs -in particular on the Third World countries. Then, the VCR's position in the creation of the revolution of the NICTs, its history, diffusion patterns and factors as well as its social, cultural and political impact in the developed media-rich and developing media-poor countries are discussed.

Chapter 3 provides a brief background to the Islamic Revolution of 1977-79 in Iran. It is assumed that social, cultural, political and economic sub-structures of the Iranian society and state have undergone profound transformation due to the encounter of its traditional epistemological and societal order with the Western civilisation. Therefore, Iran's historical tradition and its modernisation process during the past two centuries and, in particular, the development of modern mass media (press since the 1840s and broadcasting since the 1940s) are debated here. The modern mass media and its 'modernising', Western content during the 1960s and 1970s, along with the social, economic, and political lines, were crucial in the creation of the Islamic uprising of 1977-79. This chapter is divided into three historical parts which deal with the Qajar era (1785-1925), the Pahlavi era (1925-1979), and the Revolution of 1977-79.

The following two chapters (4 and 5) provide a detailed 'biography' of the VCR in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This biography is discussed in two chapters not merely because of the necessity of keeping each chapter to a reasonable size but also for historical reasons. It is now well established that the history of post-revolutionary Iran can be better understood if it is divided into two periods of pre- and post-1988/89 changes -known as the First and Second Republics. The First Republic, discussed in

Chapter 4, covers the general socio-political changes in the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution, the state cultural and mass communications media policies, and in detail the problematic life of VCR until 1983 and its prohibition until the end of the era. The Second Republic, presented in Chapter 5, starts with a brief narrative of the overall changes in politics and state policies and discusses the events and debates which preceded the legalisation of video sets and clubs in 1994. This chapter covers VCR-related issues up to mid-1995 and so does not refer to any possible shifts since then.

These two chapters start with general narratives of the main events and trends in the political, cultural, and economic policies of the state and features of the society. Then, the cultural/media orientations of the state are discussed and within this context, the VCR-related policies of the state and the VCR's impact are discussed in details. The discussions on the VCR are merely classified under the relevant years and I have avoided breaking the analysis into multiple subtitles.

Section Two

Section Two is a conventional one-shot survey research covering issues of VCR use and impact at the familial and individual level. The data was gathered using two separate questionnaires A & B: for 600 male and female high school students and 600 their parents respectively (altogether 1,200 questionnaires). The data gathering took place in selected areas of Greater Tehran during the period of fieldwork (December 1994-March 1995). This survey questions the (imagined and actual) 'effects' of VCRs on specific attitudes, expectations, and behaviour of the Iranian youth. For this purpose the role of some VCR-related factors (e.g., ownership, amount of VCR viewing, content and genre preferences, audience activity, and parental control) as well as non-VCR-related factors are studied.

The section aims to study: (1) expectations, uses and gratifications of the Iranian audience of video cassettes; (2) types of audience activity aimed at eliminating the 'negative' effects of VCR; (3) effects of VCR ownership on usage of other media with particular focus on television; (4) reported/actual effects of VCR-related as well as non-VCR-related factors on adolescent's attitudes, expectations and behaviour; and (5)

importance of parental control on adolescent's VCR use and on their actual received effects.

The original research project was eventually carried out and the data of both questionnaires transferred into SPSS files. These files include the data of 545 A and 450 B questionnaires. But, questionnaire B (parents) has been omitted in the analysis and so relevant hypotheses and questions are not discussed here. This decision is made in the light of some painful realities which include, among other problems, limitations of time and available funds.

Section Two covers chapters 6 through 9. Being a survey, this section comprises theoretical and methodological chapters as well as quantitative findings. Chapter 6 provides a theoretical background to the study of VCRs' impact on the perceptions and behaviour of individual audience members. It should be noted that VCR is a relatively new field and, therefore, does not possess exclusive theories or methodology. In fact, in the revolutionary years of the 1980s theorists and researchers started to question the feasibility of the conventional theories and methodology in the environment of new media -including VCRs. Recovering from the sudden shock of the revolutionary booms, media scholars are gradually producing more empirical studies on the NICTs. First empirical studies of VCR use appeared in the early 1980s, however, still there is a need for more elaborate studies. Therefore, the present study uses existing VCR literature but mainly exploits the conventional theories existing in media effects and audience research. In this regard, I have focused extensively on Cultivation Analysis and notion of Audience Activity as the theoretical frame of this research. Cultivation Analysis is chosen due to its elaborate success in explaining accumulated effects of long-term exposure to media content and the notion of Audience Activity is based on the Uses and Gratifications perspective.

Chapter 7 elaborates the methodological procedures followed in the quantitative section of this research. It explains this is an exploratory-explanatory, cross-sectional survey research on potential (cultivation) effects of VCRs in the Iranian society. The limitations of this study are discussed (under its five characteristics: as a cross-sectional survey, as a media effects research, as an international Cultivation research, as a study in the context of contemporary Iran, and as an explanatory-exploratory research). Then,

the research procedures and techniques (such as the structure of the questionnaire) as well as sampling are elaborated. The problems of the fieldwork and also the particular problematic of causality in the interpretation of the results are discussed.

Chapters 8 and 9 present the quantitative results drawn from the questionnaire A. Chapter 8 deals with part of the statistical findings related to the hypotheses about: the VCRs' class-based diffusion pattern, ritualistic and instrumental types of VCR use patterns, VCRs' uses and impact on the uses of conventional mass media, and the changes of VCR use patterns by the length of ownership. Chapter 9, on the other hand, deals with the statistical findings about the hypotheses on: effects of long-term exposure of Iranian youth to video programmes; the role of different socio-cultural factors (such as social class, gender, and age) as well as some VCR-related elements (e.g., various content genres, language and production country). In this chapter a special attention is given to the problem of causality and techniques employed to eliminate the problem. In these chapters, each section is devoted to the findings of one hypothesis and a brief conclusion is also provided.

Finally, Chapter 10 provides a condensed summary of all findings. I try to combine the results of the qualitative and quantitative discussions and view the VCR's life and role as a new medium of mass communications in Iranian society.

Section One

A Case Study of VCR-Related Discourses and Policies

Chapter II

The Revolution of NICTs:

VCRs and the Third World

This chapter starts with a brief discussion on the revolutionary impact of the New Information and Communications Technologies (NICTs¹) with a particular focus on the Third World. Then, I will focus on the VCR, its history, diffusion patterns and factors as well as its social, cultural and political impact.

The Revolution of NICTs in the 1980s

The production and penetration of the NICTs since the early 1970s have ushered modern societies into a new phase of human civilisation -*the information age*. The coming of this new state of global civilisation was foreseen from the late 1960s and early 1970s and its implications and meanings have been discussed ever since. Using a range of miscellaneous terms and phrases², many scholars have tried to articulate the mighty and complex potential of the NICTs. For example, Peter Drucker's *Age of Discontinuity* (1969) and Simon Ramo's *Century of Mismatch* (1970) suggested that the acceleration of technological development is transforming all social structures and institutions and the new state must be regarded as a new paradigm. Also, Daniel Bell's *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973) and Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave* (1980) stressed the incisive social, economic, political, and cultural implications of the new technologies. These two prominent writers concluded that modern societies are evolving toward informational,

¹ In this context new technologies include all recent innovations which are related to the production, transmission and consumption of textual, audio, and visual messages - e.g., Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs), Direct Broadcasting Satellite (DBS), Cable T.V., Teletext, Personal Computers, and so on.

² Consider the similarities between the vast literature on the Information Age, Post-Industrialism, Globalisation, Post-Modernism, Communications Media Age and alike.

post-industrial age; i.e., from manufacturing-centred toward high-technology and information-oriented societies.

There does not seem to exist an unanimity among scholars on the nature of the current transformations. It is widely believed that the global economic, social, and cultural structure in the 1990s is quite different from that of the 1970s. A fairly huge body of social philosophical theory and research stresses this transformation. The emergent society has been called variously as 'post-industrial' (Bell, 1973), 'post-modern' (Harvey, 1989), or more commonly as 'information society' (see e.g., Ito, 1981; Rogers, 1986; and Neuman, 1982, 1991). Others do agree that the phase constitute an evolutionary development of global capitalism but prefer other terms with more connotations of continuity, such as 'late capitalism' (Jameson, 1990) and 'high modernity' (Giddens, 1990). Whatever the preferred terms, it seems that a central feature of this emerging global society is the relatively fundamental significance of 'information and communications cultural capital'.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the central forces behind the on-going global revolution are those related to the sphere of information and communications. For instance, Williams suggests that "it is the technological advances in computing and communication that are seen as [the] driving forces" (1987: 4). Thus, he believes that the new stage of human civilisation could be entitled the *Communications Age*. He concludes that the newly developing computing technologies and mass and interpersonal (i.e., tele-) communications media are significantly affecting the social, economic and cultural aspects of societies. Similarly, Toffler (1980) elaborates the idea that the 'new electronic media' form the cornerstone of the 'third great communications revolution' in human history, following those of writing and print.

This (r)evolution in its core is related to the production, storage, management, transmission, and consumption of cultural commodities; that is, the hardware and content of the communications media and information technologies. As McQuail (1994) points out, in contrast with the old media, the main features of the new communications technologies include decentralisation of control; high capacity; inter-activity of the receiver and sender; flexibility of form, content and use; abundance of supply of culture and information at low cost; and diversification of choice.

Globally, all societies are being challenged by the implications of the revolution of NICTs. The international expansion of these revolutionary forces has created new -and/or reinforced old- fundamental questions and dilemmas for all societies. These problematic issues include a number of unprecedented shifts in all social spheres and in levels ranging from individual to national and global. Many attempts have been made to suggest a comprehensive list of the implications of NICTs (see, for instance, Ruben, 1985, and Williams, 1987). It seems possible to classify these implications in three *interacting* levels: a) *macro* (international and global); b) *meso* (national and institutional); and c) *micro* (individual).

In the macro level, as Reeves (1993) suggests, the revolution may be seen as two highly interrelated processes: ‘transnationalisation’ and ‘informationalisation’. The first is centrally related to the increasing dominance of transnational corporations in the production and trans-border distribution of media content. While the latter focuses on the changing nature, and increasing importance, of the sphere of information and communications nationally and internationally. McQuail (1994) mentions four main features though it seems possible to reduce them to the two interrelated processes mentioned above. His discussion includes internationalisation (or Globalisation), informatization, rise of a post-modern culture, and individuation as key features of the contemporary structure. With individuation, he refers to “the virtues of individualism and of the free market” and considers post-modernist cultural theory as “very much a theory of or for the ‘information society’” (27). Informatization too refers to the ‘information society’ in which occurs: “the growth of service and information-based occupations, the great increase in the flow of information within and across national frontiers, the rise of knowledge as a source of wealth and power and the great dependence of modern political and economic systems on information and on communication technologies” (McQuail, 1994: 26). Although the older mass media were already important after the Second World War, the unprecedented expansion of the new electronic media (or ‘telematics’) profoundly accelerated the amount/size of production and flow of information and media content since the late 1970s. Moreover, internationalisation of economy, politics, and socio-cultural affairs has coincided with the globalisation of media firms, technologies, and contents.

The new technologies at the meso level are changing the structure and performance of national societal institutions (power structure, family, culture, education, and so on). For instance, in work 'telecommuting' looks as a reality now. Also changes in office technologies and management techniques are imposing a profound transformation in working qualifications and standards of performance (Williams, 1987). The communications and leisure institutions have possibly undergone the most severe changes. Nowadays, media consumers and entertainment seekers are astonished. Globally, they are provided by a range of broad, diverse, flexible and personal electronic channels of communications, information and entertainment. In other words, the NICTs have revolutionised the conventional questions and created a greater flexibility in matters related to who consumes what kind of content, where, when, and through which media channel (see, e.g., Ruben, 1985). Furthermore, economy (banking and finance), politics (governance system, citizenship, elections and campaigns), health care, education, family (structure, life, values), religion, culture, science, art and alike are increasingly being transformed. These transformations are generated by the NICTs and, therefore, are expected to accelerate with the higher penetration and accumulation of the 'high' technologies throughout the globe.

It has been argued that the NICTs have had enormous effects on the individual. A vast number of researchers have suggested diverging categories of effects. For example, according to Williams, Rice & Dordick (1985) "there are certain generalised types of behavioural impact regarding human reaction to, interaction with, and management of the new communication technologies" (161-162) and their contents. They classify six types of behavioural effects which include: (a) *Attitudes* involved in diffusion of innovations, particularly new communications media, have changed toward less critical adoption and utilisation. (b) *Perception of time and space* have paradoxically and dramatically been transformed among the communicator and the communicatee. This is due to the actual release of communication from temporal, spatial and technical constraints and the consequent increase in independence (in terms of the timing and location) of the components of communication. This independence has resulted in generation of a set of new problems such as information speed, misunderstanding, and inefficiency in communication. (c) *Connectivity* of people throughout the world has increased, insofar as, any person at any time, for any kind of purpose can reach any other person or group with

means of diverse networked channels. (d) *Mobility* of individuals is more possible under the conditions of the new technologies. Facilitating remote communication between people, the new technologies reduce the familial, social and professional reasons for their presence in one place and, on the other hand, provide means for geographical mobility. (e) *Increased Choice* which is the result of the diffusion of varied technologies. This increase is not only related to leisure choices but rather, combined with other effects, gives a range of broad alternatives for work conditions and environment. (f) *Socialisation* of new generation, due to their access to diverse communications and information media, has undergone a radical shift (Williams; Rice & Dordick, 1985).

The new technologies have given rise to a number of issues at the international level such as: “cultural domination and subordination; the control of communications, cultural productions, and distribution; access to economic, political, and other information; the creation of a ‘new world information order’ and the regulation and control of transborder data flows; the determination of state policy in economic, cultural and other areas; the development of ‘indigenous’ technological and production capacity; and understanding and constant construction of what is ‘national’ in cultural, historic, or any other sense” (Reeves, 1993: 2). However, it seems that different countries of the ‘North’ and ‘South’, or the developed and ‘Third World’ countries, are facing differing problems in kind or degree. These differences can be explained in view of the speed and depth of the penetration of the revolutionary technologies in various countries and the pre-existing cultural, political, media, and economic characteristics of the different countries. In particular, Third World countries somehow inevitably find these new, or newly pressing old, questions more vital and appalling largely because they lack the financial and technological base crucial for competition on the international markets.

Third World and New Communications Media

The so-called Third World or developing countries since the early 1960s have developed their mass media as part and parcel of their development and modernisation plans. Communication scholars, such as Lerner (1958) and Schramm (1964) viewed mass media as the main channels for diffusion of modern attitudes and tendencies. They believed that it is the relative lack of these tendencies that is the central obstacle to the

overall development of the Third World. Therefore, they emphasised that diffusion of modern attitudes and tendencies could promote economic consumption, increase social and political participation and so result in the acceleration of development. Based on this perspective, many Third World states as well as international organisations during the 1950s and 1960s attempted to develop their media infrastructures as a strategic part of their general developmental plans. Thus by the early 1970s, the field of production, transmission, and dissemination of information and communications technologies as well as cultural commodities had become one of the vital sectors of the international political economy (Reeves, 1993). Lacking sufficient technological, financial and expert manpower resources, the Third World countries by then were transformed into consumers of Western communications technologies and media programmes.

The imbalances in the North-South relations in terms of control of media infrastructures as well as production and consumption of communications technologies and programmes have severely been criticised since the early 1970s. Critical researchers revealed the predominance of imported Western programmes in the Third World and looked at their role in maintaining the world capitalist systems. They regarded the 'communications & development' paradigm as an ethnocentric, ahistoric, and unilinear perspective which conceives development as an evolutionary and endogenous process (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990). Therefore, beyond the dominant paradigm of communications and development, during the 1970s two critical approaches emerged when considering North-South relations in terms of media hardware (organisation and system) and software (content). These closely linked critical theories are usually referred to as *cultural imperialism* and *media imperialism*. Describing the role of the media in creation of cultural imperialism, Schiller (1969, 1976), Dorfman and Mattelart (1975), and Pasquali (1976), among others, noted that the media structures and content play a crucial role in the perpetuation of the capitalist system. Accordingly, mass media, instead of serving the autonomy and development of the developing peripheral countries, preserve and strengthen their dependence on the developed core. They also insisted that the penetration of the ideological elements from the West generate detrimental cultural, political, economic and psychological conditions among the Third World nations. These researchers point out that the developing countries through the imported, or foreign-inspired domestic, programmes become emulators of Western-style market-oriented

models and ways of life. Beltran (1978), also, concluded that the elements of Western culture prevalent in the imported or foreign-inspired domestic news and entertainment programmes are inappropriate for the consumer nations.

The advocates of media imperialism draw a similar conclusion from slightly different premises. They de-emphasise the Marxist economic determinism and instead consider the international imbalance in the media and communications hardware and software relationships as the factor which sustains the global imperialism. For instance, Nordenstreng & Varis (1974) and Tunstall (1977) focused on the media content and studied the international flow of television programmes. Boyd (1982) observed that the developing nations, in order to receive equipments and facilities or secure their achievements, actually involve the developed countries in their media systems. Boyd-Barratt (1980) and Lee (1980) concluded that one-way flow of news and information and the investments by the developed countries' corporations in Third World media, per se, can affect socio-political and economic dependency situations. The media/cultural imperialism theory claims that the Western cultural values -such as consumerism, sex roles, racism, individualism and so on- are embedded in the various media genres (news, entertainment including films and TV programmes, advertising, and music). These values (usually conflated as 'American') are transmitted, grasped and internalised by audiences in the Third World and consequently facilitate the global 'cultural homogenisation' and 'cultural synchronisation' by destroying their 'cultural authenticity' (Hamelink, 1983).

In order to understand the changes in the field of international communication during the 1980s and 1990s, one could analyse the similarities of these paradigms, despite their apparent conflicts. A retrospective analysis reveals that the 'communications and development' as well as 'cultural/media imperialism' paradigms developed in, and corresponded to, a geo-historical era which was dominated by a particular global structure of communications media. This structure could be characterised as one with these main, but by no means exclusive, features: (1) A few national or international (often Western) media organisations predominated and controlled (2) the production of costly and limited contents that contained cultural and ideological messages which were (3) transmitted with various technical difficulties across borders (nations or cultures) in a one-way fashion and finally (4) the media content was consumed by a relatively small and passive Third World audience. It seems that these features resulted in generation of a set of hypotheses that,

tested or not, provided the axiomatic foundations for both theories. Both paradigms seemingly are based on a central assumption that stresses on a one-way flow of media infrastructure and content from West ('America') to the Third World. Furthermore, theoretically both paradigms echo theories of powerful media and attribute inevitable "effects" to the media content in the receiver countries. These effects, it is argued that, include socio-cultural and politico-economic autonomy and development *or* dependence of the consumer on the producer. In other words, these theories attribute radical transformations in the consumer countries: the dominant paradigm expects a '*Western-style modernisation*' while the critical theory awaits for a '*modern-style Westernisation*'. The former optimistically hopes for positive effects and the latter pessimistically warns about negative impacts.

But, it is evident that the underlying issues of international communications (i.e., the North-South media interrelations) have altered during the turbulent decade of the 1980s. New technologies have removed technical and financial barriers of production, storage and distribution of audio-visual and textual content. Diffusion of these innovations, along with other changes in media structures, have diversified transmission channels of the conventional media -for instance, films and TV programmes are made accessible through DBS, VCRs, and Cable as well. The consequent phenomenal increase in the amount of diversified media content produced and distributed locally, nationally and internationally has coupled with the emergence of relatively new players in the arena of global media. Furthermore, there seems to be a 'diversity' and an 'abundance' of media technologies and media content available to the audiences around the globe. These changes have more or less occurred throughout the world. But, what are their theoretical implications for the field of international communications? Certainly correct answers are yet to become clarified and empirically tested.

Video Cassette Recorders and the Revolution of NICTs

VCR: A Revolutionary Technology?

The Video Cassette Recorder (VCR)³ has a distinctive place among the NICTs. It has played a crucial part in the realisation of the revolutionary transformations in the field of communications media⁴. Throughout the world, as Levy (1987) observes, it was the high penetration of VCRs in homes during the early 1980s which was the pioneering fact in the realisation of the global media and the 'global village'. In the meantime, with a consumer boom, VCR rapidly reached the level of a relatively omnipresent commodity and "was quickly established as *the* major innovation in home entertainment since television" (Gray, 1992: 1, emphasis added). This position has not been contested since the early 1980s. Although during the turbulent decade of the 1980s, other technologies showed high home penetration rates (e.g., cable television in the US), in global comparison, the VCR was never matched (Levy, 1987). By the mid-1980s, within less than a decade after its very first appearance in the market, the VCR penetration rate in some countries amounted to more than fifty per cent. In other words, more than half the population in some developed and Third World countries (for example Japan, USA, Britain, Malaysia and the Persian Gulf states) had purchased and owned a VCR set. Further, it "penetrated areas that the printing press and other information paraphernalia [had] not successfully reached after centuries" (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: ix). Toward the end of the decade, the penetration rate approached 80% or even 90% of households in countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Great Britain and the United States (Straubhaar & Lin, 1989).

VCR has gained a high credit for its applications in industry, health-care, education and so on. But, from the communications perspective, it is its utilisation as a

³ It is necessary to note that, contrary to early speculations by some researchers who recognised VCR as an individual communications delivery device, in this research VCR is considered as a mass medium. It is because, as Straubhaar & Boyd (1989: 165) suggest, in a high penetration environment in a number of countries, VCRs provide diversified nonbroadcast material to large audiences and therefore, takes on some characteristics of a 'mass medium'. Furthermore, Ogan (1989b) argues that another sign that VCR has become a mass medium is the use of advertising on recorded cassettes.

⁴ The opinion that views VCR as a revolutionary technology is not commonly held. While a few researchers have suggested that VCR can be characterised as some sort of radical discontinuity in the mass communications process (e.g., Gubern, 1985; and McQuail, 1986), others say that it is a mere complementary extension to the existing media (e.g., Rubin & Rubin, 1989; and Levy & Gunter, 1988). For more discussion see Levy (1989).

'medium' of mass communications that makes it a new field of theorisation and research. Briefly speaking, the VCR is an electronic device which can record and *playback* video cassettes through a television set. It can record television programmes off-air to play at a more convenient time (*time-shifting*) and also can duplicate a pre-recorded content through being connected to another VCR set. It can also repeatedly play any available video cassette. Moreover, while recording it can be used to avoid unwanted material such as advertisements and political propaganda (*zapping*) and when re-playing, it can be used to fast-forward through any undesirable, recorded materials (*zipping*).⁵

As suggested, video is very closely related to television -both in its domestic use as well as in its academic theorisation (Gray, 1992). While television audiences are offered a choice between a limited number of channels that transmit scheduled, 'standard' programmes, the VCR can extend the viewers' opportunities beyond the controlled and limited channels (diversification). Video owners can disrupt the 'temporal regulation' of the television stations. They can decide more easily and freely what, where, when, with whom, how, and 'why' to watch from a wider range (of all kinds of) available programmes, whether television programmes, cinematic or video productions. These programmes, also, may include culturally and/or politically 'mainstream' or 'marginal' and 'prohibited' material. VCRs enable people to individualise (personalise) their video viewing and more effectively "meet their own perceived needs and interests" (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 9). Therefore, VCRs may transform television from "a mass to an individually or perhaps family-oriented medium" (Lin, 1990).

This personalisation effect of the VCR, can also be described also as 'de-standardisation' of television (and cinema) channels. This function may challenge the control of dominant organisations (governments and broadcasting corporations) over formal communications channels. Therefore, the main implication of the VCR lies in its ability to shift the control power from centralised organisations into the hands of the massive, unorganised audiences. In this sense, VCRs can be compared to audio-cassette recorders which have similar effects (i.e., decentralisation) in radio broadcasting (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989). Furthermore, VCR's potential for decentralisation seems to be greater than that of audio-cassette recorders, since they have the "additional impact of a

⁵ On the utilities of VCRs see, for example, Straubhaar & Lin (1989), Rubin & Bantz (1987 & 1988), Harvey & Rothe (1985/86), and Donohue & Henke (1988).

picture, and the ability to more effectively disperse the messages of two powerful media, world films and television” (Ganley & Ganley, 1987: xi).

Being a home- and family-based medium, VCRs have had an enormous effect on familial life. This also has been a great centre of focus among media scholars and many others. As Gray (1992) observes, the VCR like any other new technology enters in the existing household structure which, in itself, is composed of ideology, gender and age roles, traditions, moral values and socialisation processes. Having its abilities to change the “modality of viewing” (12), the VCR interacts with the family life and its numerous functions. Therefore, the household structure and familial ideology “become encoded in the new technology both in terms of its physical use and choice of software” (252). She also suggests that technologies such as the VCR “have a life even before they enter the household, for example, in discussions about the appropriateness, or otherwise, of its purchase, and also that technologies have a developing biography within household after they have been acquired” (164).

History of VCR Technology

Despite its relatively recent explosive penetration as a home based media, ‘video’ technology has a longer history than VCR.⁶ One may look at movie (particularly 16mm) projectors as the pioneer. Yet, the history of VCR which started with the production of electromagnetic cassettes for recording and playing video content goes back some years before its mass penetration as a consumer product in the late 1970s. As early as May 1965 at a National Association of Broadcasters convention in Chicago, Ampex Corporation demonstrated its new improvement -a reel-to-reel video-tape recorder (VTR) with broadcasting quality (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

The VTR machines, along the U-Matic units introduced in 1972, were only compatible with either one of the different broadcasting signal systems (PAL, SECAM, NTSC). The VTR and U-Matic units used respectively half inch or 3/4 inch. The sets were inconvenient, heavy and expensive and the cassettes were expensive and could contain programmes for 30 minutes to a maximum of one hour. Also, because of the issue

⁶ For detailed discussion see Klopfenstein (1989) in which a chronology of important events in the history of home video is given dating back to the 1920s.

of incompatibility of the broadcasting systems and available machines, VTRs could rarely be used for off-air recording (time-shifting).

In 1975 Sony Corporation produced the Betamax home video recorders which were marketed in some areas a year later (Boyd, 1987). The Betamax VCRs had several advantages over U-Matic units since they were smaller, lighter and less expensive. They could easily record off-air or be simply connected to another set to duplicate programmes and also used half inch re-recordable electromagnetic tapes. The tapes, too, were relatively less heavy, less expensive and could record for longer times (Ibid.). These improvements provided the video technology with all the conditions for a new electronic medium and a highly demanded industrial product. From this time on, the VCR technology and 'video culture' became a familiar common sense and intellectual subject. The subsequent explosion of VCR markets around the world expanded the base for an international VCR hard and software industry -including the informal sector of smuggling of video sets and piracy⁷ of programmes in and out of countries.

The Betamax system, besides its relatively high price and heavy weight, lacked an important function which was the ability to play tapes recorded with different systems. By the year 1980, some JVC and then Panasonic and Hitachi VCRs could play both PAL and SECAM systems but American NTSC tapes still were not satisfactorily compatible with this system. The new VHS system very soon grabbed the market from Sony's Betamax. During the early 1980s, VCR prices fell and machines with more features, such as wireless remote control, appeared in the market. Finally, in 1984 the first real multisystem VCR was produced and marketed by Hitachi. This machine put an end to the age of Betamax series since it could play PAL, SECAM, and American NTSC tapes satisfactorily (Ganley & Ganley, 1987).

It seems reasonable to conclude that in almost one decade (1976-85) VCR technology advanced to its astonishing high potential. By the end of the period multi-standard VCRs were enable to record off-air signals from all broadcasting formats and re-play all pre-recorded cassettes in every kind of television receiver format. Cassettes had become lighter, cheaper, accessible, re-recordable and could contain several hours of programmes.

⁷ Video piracy is the illegal duplication of cassettes and programmes without paying royalty to the copyright holders.

From the industry point of view, an expansion in the market and the number of competing manufacturers followed the technical improvements which occurred in VCR technology. As a result of this increasing supply and competition, VCR prices dramatically decreased universally. In the early 1970s a yet problematic VTR set would cost thousands of dollars, while a decade later a single or even double system VCRs were available on average at US \$400-\$500. The prices continued to fall and in the mid-1980s a multi-system set cost only US \$200-\$300 (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

VCRs in the Third World

As discussed earlier, the new technologies have given rise to a number of issues in national and international domains, particularly in the Third World, where the VCR as a pioneering technology has had a great role in the creation of the new media environment. There seems to be disagreement amongst scholars on the implications of the new technologies, somehow from the same perspectives as in the case of more traditional ones. As Garnham (1993) points out, this opposition has been apparent in the debates on the New World Information Order.

On the one hand, scholars who value the modernisation effects of the new technologies regard VCRs as new channels of diffusion of democracy and modernisation. This implication is criticised as Globalisation of the Western, notably American, culture which may imply the devaluation of local cultures. On the other hand, critics of the global media point to the possible effects of the technologies in maintaining the local identities (localisation). Critical scholars believe that new technological developments have not bridged the gap between the developed and Third World countries but have rather enhanced it toward new frontiers. In the new media environment, the applicability of state policies for preservation of cultural and national identities has become less, if at all, possible. Furthermore, cultural domination and subordination of the Third World and its “cultural invasion” (McQuail, 1994) have been enhanced by the NICTs.

Here a brief examination of the diffusion of VCRs in the Third World seems useful. The pre-existing cultural, political, media, and economic characteristics of the receiver countries have played a great role in the diffusion of the new technology. These

characteristics provide one set of factors which, along with others, determine the real functions, uses and implications of the NICTs in the developing countries.

Factors of diffusion

The explosive penetration of VCRs since the late 1970s has been unique and, in this sense, has revolutionised the media consumption around the world. As any other technology, VCR's diffusion throughout the world can be understood in terms of its costs and benefits. Universally, VCRs' high potential for personalisation of media usage, diversification and destandardisation of the media channels, and decentralisation of the control power gave them a very high desirability. At the same time, the VCR gradually became more convenient, technologically more advanced, and compatible with various broadcasting systems. Also, in the meantime, an unprecedented market of pirated cassettes emerged in various regions which offered a huge range of cheap choice. On the other hand, expansion of the market for VCR technology resulted in price cuts and so the VCR was transformed from a luxurious to a more affordable communications and entertainment product.

It has been noted that the VCRs' benefits were much higher for the media-poor Third World countries than for the media-rich developed ones. This was due to a set of "systemic, structural, policy, and audience-demand" reasons (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 7). These reasons⁸ include elements such as economic development; broadcast policies and media structures that produce certain types of media content and limit others; government tariff and restriction policies that make VCRs more expensive; interests of individuals in controlling and diversifying their media consumption. The audiences' desires to add diversity to television viewing, to circumvent systemic or government controls on the content, and to gain greater personal control over information and entertainment viewing has increased the VCRs' desirability. These preconditions obviously resulted in emergence and facilitation of the explosive home penetration of VCRs in the developing countries.

⁸ For a statistical discussion on the importance of the economic and media reasons refer to Straubhaar & Lin (1989). This study tests 16 hypothesis in relation to the effects of (a) income and prices, (b) other media and urbanisation, and (c) television programming diversity on VCR penetration. Also see Straubhaar & Boyd (1989).

Various research has shown that economic conditions of different countries and social classes highly, if not uniquely, determine the penetration rate of VCRs. For instance, Straubhaar & Lin (1989) studied national level statistics from 46 countries and revealed that GNP per capita -that is, the average wealth of a nation- was the single strongest factor correlated with VCR penetration ($r=+.54$). "Income distribution also plays a considerable role. Overall for all 46 countries [...] VCR penetration was negatively and significantly correlated to skewed or concentrated [income] distribution (p.136).

The broadcast model and potential of the Third World has significantly augmented VCRs' penetration rate. In most of the developing countries mass media has comparatively very limited channel diversity and, moreover, its content tends to be less diversified. It has been proved, see for example Heeter (1984) and Lin (1987), that the diversity of the number of available media channels (broadcast and cable) as well as the diversity of the content of the media have positive effects on the VCRs' penetration. It has been also verified that these factors determine the different usages of the VCRs in various media environments. In the developing media-poor countries, VCRs are utilised essentially for re-playing pre-recorded material, while in developed (or even a few developing media-rich) countries they seem to be used primarily for time shifting (Straubhaar & Lin, 1989). In other words, in most of the Third World countries, where the audiences feel deprived of diversified media content, the VCRs' marginal utility is very high. This facilitated VCRs' fast and ubiquitous penetration.

In the Third World, media structures and content are usually strictly controlled by the state. This, in one way or another, increases 'media frustration' among several sectors of the society and so add to the VCRs' desirability. Most of the Third World states promote selected messages and control the flow of foreign *and* regional news and programmes. Consequently, the media content is less sophisticated; more didactic, propagandistic, and education-oriented (i.e., do not contain 'sufficient' or 'appropriate' entertainment programmes). The content is also biased for the interests of the 'nation' and/or dominant political groups within the 'state'. In other words, in developing countries "aside from censorship for moral, cultural, religious, and political reasons, and just plain poor or inadequate programming, TV is considered unsatisfactory [...] because it is used excessively for religious harangue or government propaganda" (Ganley & Ganley; 1987).

This predicament results in widespread frustration of many sectors of the audience: ethno-linguistic minorities are not represented; the globalised higher classes are not provided with the desired amount of foreign content; opposition or dissenting ideological and political groups are ignored and 'misinformed'; the intelligentsia, professional and well-educated groups do not receive enough modern and advanced programmes; and even the general public seem to advocate a less serious and educational and a more entertainment-oriented media. The media frustration adds to the VCR's desirability since it appears to be the best, if not the only, available technology to break the conditions of passivity among the media audiences. Therefore, it has been suggested that VCRs' high penetration in the developing, media-poor and state controlled countries to some degree is simply the Third World manifestation of the global tendency for an active audience (Rosengren; Wenner & Palmgreen, 1985).

The above-mentioned factors facilitated the VCR boom of 1976-1985 in some Third World countries. The VCR penetration in some of the developing countries was so rapid that by the mid-1980s it exceeded the diffusion rates of most developed countries. While in the United States, for example, the rate was 1.1% in the beginning of the 1980s, 35% by mid-1986 and 60% in 1989 (Lindlof & Shatzer, 1990), the VCR penetration at least in two Arab nations (namely, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) was much higher. In 1982 Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had a rate of 61.4% and 52.7% respectively of which 27.6% and 20% were purchased during the previous year (Boyd, 1987). This rate mounted to 90% by the end of the decade (Straubhaar & Lin, 1989).

According to available estimates for 1984-85 the penetration rate of VCR in TV households in Latin America ranged from 1.4% (Argentina) to 31.3% in Venezuela (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 187). By 1986 the six oil-rich Persian Gulf Arabic states had witnessed a 75% (in Saudi Arabia and Oman) to 88% (in Kuwait) rate of VCR penetration in TV homes. Other Muslim Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East had rates ranging from 1% in Sudan up to 55% in Lebanon (Ibid.: 66-67).

Diffusion patterns

As discussed, the media appetites of many groups of Third World audiences were not satisfied by the content transmitted through the limited and controlled channels. This

frustration generated a huge market for programmes which, being usually 'unconventional' and 'unorthodox', were primarily supplied by smuggling and piracy. Some researchers argue that the penetration of VCR content has proceeded through different stages (see, e.g., Boyd, 1987). The VCR programmes were primarily dominated by imports from Western media-rich countries (particularly America) due to their availability in the international black markets and also audiences tastes. But, because of the expansion of the supply and changes in the audiences' preferences, the products of some other countries were gradually added to their video diet.

Media content is closely related to two issues of original country of production and kind of content. In both dimensions, the VCR has responded to the existing diverse media tastes. Considering the international and regional flow of video programmes, similarity of the language of the producer and receiver countries plays a crucial role. For instance, Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) report that in Arab countries Egyptian films and dramas are popular. Ganley & Ganley (1987) too report that British products in ex-British colonies and French films in French-speaking countries are highly sought after. Nevertheless, the mere linguistic element does not determine the popularity of the imported contents. Hong Kong films have big audiences beyond Chinese-speaking populations and "Hindi and other Indian films are tremendously popular, not only in India [or Pakistan and Bangladesh] but also in the Middle East -even though most people don't understand the language" (Ibid.: 66). Not surprisingly, throughout the developing countries, as elsewhere, the flow of old and first-run American feature movies, TV serials and music shows has been remarkable. These programmes dominate much of what is available in Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia in English or dubbed and subtitled. This has also added "to the already pronounced flow of Anglo-American film, television, and music video material in English to the Third World" (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 14).

Regarding the type of content, VCRs provided all kinds of culturally or politically restricted or forbidden material. In many Third World countries, all kinds of video programmes have been made available through VCRs which otherwise were scarce if not unknown. These programmes include feature movies, music shows, and TV serials some of which were considered 'unlawful' and 'immoral' by some states. In particular, troublesome violent and pornographic content were made available for audiences of

different gender and age groups in various cultural and religious environments. Although previously available for specific groups, Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) report that “various case studies show that pornography frequently dominates VCR viewing, particularly in areas where the VCR is a new phenomena” (12).

Due to the restriction policies of some governments, the VCR became an ideal product for the underground smuggling business. The existence of an informal sector (black market) in most of the Third World economies along the flow of migrant labour in these countries nourished strong and uncontrollable underground networks. These networks existed and, despite occasionally severe government restrictions, smuggled and marketed millions of VCR sets in different countries. The VCR sets and cassettes were smuggled in thousands (Ganley & Ganley, 1986). Furthermore, by the late 1980s, for instance in Arab states in the Persian Gulf region, as much as 50 per cent of the legally imported machines were annually taken home by expatriate workers or smuggled out to other countries (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

The smuggling business was not limited to VCR sets but, equally importantly, included video tape piracy. The very diverse demands of the very segmented audiences around the world generated a huge market for every kind of video programmes. These programmes too were supplied by a range of agents including the underground networks. Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) suggest that in most countries 75 to 80 per cent of all tapes are pirated -illegally smuggled in and duplicated. Also, the illegal penetration of VCR sets and cassettes is not limited to the organised criminal groups. The huge number of professionals, travellers, workers, migrants, and tourists have played a crucial role in the transborder diffusion of VCRs and video tapes. Ganley & Ganley (1986: 51) observed that “the introduction of video cassettes has followed an almost uncanny pattern of uniformity world-wide. In the very beginning, a few cassettes were introduced by individual travellers, migrants, privileged elites, tourists, petty smugglers, and others” and then [organised smugglers] and video clubs were soon formed by groups.

As to the socio-cultural pattern of its diffusion, the VCR followed the example of other innovative technologies. Its purchase and utilisation patterns are determined by the social, cultural and economic characteristics. The VCR entered the Third World societies primarily as a luxurious device. Its relatively high costs (price, complexity, novelty, and

cultural effects) along its varying desirability meant that its adoption occurred primarily among the higher classes. It has been noted that throughout the Third World, elites are more likely to be internationalised and so have modern cultural tendencies. This characteristic explains the fact that these classes are more frustrated with their media systems and have more desire and acceptance for diversified and uncontrolled media consumption. Therefore, VCRs use was celebrated in the first place by the elite and then middle and lower classes. Straubhaar (1983) observed that the utilisation of VCRs also has a class distinction and elite and middle classes tend to use VCRs to view more internationalised programming. Furthermore, he suggests that “elites and upwardly mobile middle classes might get VCRs for more conspicuous consumption, but lower middle and lower classes will probably require a larger marginal utility for using their lower incomes to get and use a VCR. Cases can be found of poor populations getting VCRs but usually because of a manifest unhappiness with what is on broadcast television” (125-6).

Impact on existing media systems

The penetration of VCRs in the Third World since the late 1970s has definitely planted a wide range of contradictory effects and reactions. This is because, as in the case of prior communication and information technologies, there are several kinds of inquiry applied on the effects of VCR in the developed and developing countries. As Williams (1987) suggests, beyond the scientific approach (which itself has developed from political, social psychological, and sociological research), *rhetorical* and *dramatistic* analyses and critical approach have had an impact on the evaluation of the socio-political effects of technology. Again, Lindstorm (1989) argues that the VCR, as the ubiquitous pioneer of the new technologies, has been greatly influential in the realisation of the multilateral consequences of the revolution of the NICTs -particularly in the Third World.

As a new communication medium, the VCR primarily challenged and imposed deep changes in the existing media systems: the media content, audiences, and organisations. Thus, it seems reasonable to start with VCRs' effects on the existing media systems. It was suggested before that the VCR is closely related to television and cinema. VCRs' effects on the broadcast television and other media in different societies has been attributed to its complementary or competitive role as a new medium. Boyd, Straubhaar &

Lent (1989) conclude that the VCR complements the existing media in some countries and competes with them in others. This relative role depends on the diversity of channels and content of the existing media. In other words, in the media-rich countries VCR is generally used for time-shifting while in the media-poor countries it is utilised for playing otherwise scarce or restricted material (see also Ogan, 1989). Therefore, regarding its ability to personalise the decisions related to the content, time, context and place of viewing, VCR seems to appear as a relative opponent to the existing media in the developing media-poor countries. But, it complements the functions of the existing media channels among developed media-rich nations and, because of the similarity of the content to that of mainstream broadcast, it gives the opportunity mainly to alter time and place of viewing (Schoenbach & Becker, 1989).

The penetration of VCR requires the reallocation of resources of attention, time, money, and space among the audiences (Schoenbach & Becker, 1989: 362). Thus, it has affected the amount of broadcast television viewing and the content preferences of the audiences. In this way, it has relatively transformed TV “from a mass to an individually or perhaps family-oriented medium” (Lin, 1990). Globally, it is well documented that VCR has limited the amount of time which people were spending in front of the TV set for viewing ‘standard’ broadcast programmes. For instance, in the United States, audience viewing of the three television networks continuously declined during the second half of the 1980s. This decline according to many researchers and people -both inside and outside of the industry- was attributed to the video technology (Klopfenstein, 1990). Furthermore, in the developing media-poor countries the frustration and dissatisfaction of the audiences with the content of the usually didactic, propagandistic and controlled media content added to the personalisation of video consumption and lesser broadcasting viewership. Adwan (1985) reports that in three Arab countries (Iraq, Kuwait and Qagar) people used video for viewing pre-recorded entertainment programmes and so tended to consume less media: radio listening, television viewing, cinema and theatre attendances, and reading all dropped.

This tendency of the audiences in the developing countries toward more personal control in the consumption of preferred entertainment programmes “does not mean that television is neither desirable nor important, but that television may be becoming primarily a purveyor of news and of local and international sports. In areas where there is a large

VCR ownership, broadcast television as an entertainment medium seems to be decreasing in importance” (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989). It is because available entertainment content for VCR owners seems to be more abundant, more diverse in genre, uncontrolled and uncensored, newer products, and in all genres (feature movies, TV serials, music shows etc.).

VCRs have imposed a major impact on the national and international motion picture industries as well. It has been argued that the global decline of cinema attendance⁹ during the 1980s is attributable to the distribution of VCRs, along Cable TV and satellite. As Ogan (1989) argues, for example, American motion picture industry annually loses about \$1 billion to international piracy, but the same companies are earning more from video rentals than their box office revenues. This impact has been astonishing in some of the developing countries, due to the dominance of piracy and relative weakness of the industry. For example in Turkey, movie industry at its peak produced 208 films in 1976. But by 1986 when 2.5 million VCR sets were imported and several new television channels were developed, the movie industry was suffering from financial losses. Turkey produced 65 films in 1981 and its production between 1980-85 was on average 50 films per year. These shifts have been partially attributed to the high home penetration of VCR (Ogan, 1988b).

VCR provides the viewers a greater opportunity to decide on what and when they want to watch. In the developed media-rich countries the available material on VCR are not much different from what the audiences watch on conventional television channels. Therefore, they utilise VCRs only to decide on the context and time of viewing (Lindstorm, 1989). But, in the developing media-poor countries, VCRs gave the audiences the opportunity to watch unlimitedly the limited and desired material. This means that, at least some sectors of the audiences in the Third World seek more entertainment for positive (tendency toward more enjoyable content) or negative (avoidance from tensions and problems) reasons which VCRs tend to provide (Atkin, 1985). Consequently, in these countries media consumption shows increasingly stronger

⁹ Using various sources, Ogan (1989) reports that in a one year period between 1987 and 1988, the decline rate was 18.2% in France, 12.7% in Italy, 11% in Japan, 16% in Israel, 3.5% in Australia, and 5% in Austria. For Arab countries this figure amounted to more than 50% over a ten year period. Also for evidence from other developing countries see Boyd & Straubhaar (1985).

tendencies toward entertainment programmes away from the usual content of the broadcasting media (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

As discussed earlier, VCRs have radically changed the availability of media contents. They, consequently, have affected the international flow and type of content. These changes have generated resistance in various countries. Among the content made obtainable by VCR to the larger audiences, the violent and pornographic material in particular has been problematic. The unprecedented and relatively free presence of the 'obscene' material in video markets around the world has raised enormous concerns about destruction and preservation of religious and traditional values and morals; increases in crime and delinquency; freedom of media consumption and so on (See, e.g., Barlow & Hill, 1985; Boyd, 1985; Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989; Lent, 1985). The availability of pornographic material has been singled out as a major problem of VCR use in both developed and developing countries. Particular concern is focused on the access to these programmes by the adolescents and children. For instance in Britain in the early 1980s, as Gray (1992) reports, the public and social activists protested against the 'video nasties' and the consequent 'moral panic' resulted in the Video Recording Bill of 1984. Also, Barlow & Hill (1985) concluded that there was conclusive evidence of causal relations between viewing violent video programmes and violent and delinquent behaviour of the children. Though scientifically controversial, similar findings have been reported from the Third World. These reports relate increases in crime (such as rape, murder, robbery, and kidnapping) to consumption of violent and pornographic content that has recently become obtainable through VCRs (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

VCRs facilitated the free flow of foreign content which, otherwise were limited or forbidden for political, cultural and linguistic reasons. Today, programmes produced anywhere around the world can be relatively easily obtained and viewed in any country in a very short time. Therefore, VCRs have broken all the control barriers and have consequently damaged the previously significant cultural and broadcasting restriction and prohibition policies imposed on imports from specific countries (Straubhaar & Boyd, 1989). In this context, the global domination of American programmes in particular has generated some resistance where they were limited or forbidden for cultural and political reasons. Ganley & Ganley revealed that except in Iran, the USSR, and Eastern Europe, in most of the countries "the wider variety available on videocassettes seems to be regarded

as just an extension” to the previously dominant American programmes on TV and movie theatres (1987: 89). Also, Indian movies have been proscribed in Pakistan because of political conflicts between the countries and, in some cases, because of their sexual content (Lent, 1985).

In most of the developing countries these anxieties have preoccupied families and political and religious authorities. Particularly, the Muslim World has been extremely sensitive in this matter (Boyd, 1985; and Lent, 1985). As Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) discuss there is valid evidence of the wide usage of these programmes in the Muslim World that sharply contradict the moral and religious teachings of Islam. The religious authorities in these countries, based on the Islamic teachings, “have been worried about video content; not only pornography, obscenity, and excessive violence, but also about themes that depict disrespect for authorities, a more liberated role for women, or greedy consumerism and commercialism” (34). Therefore, while the print and national broadcasting media were strictly cleared of slightest reference to these messages, VCRs facilitated the diffusion of the most obscene programmes.

Two interacting characteristics of VCRs have paradoxically resulted in an increase in personal-familial control on video use. Diversification of the available content, along with the decentralisation of control power, created a vacuum of control. At the same time, VCR from the outset was -very much like television- a home-and-family-based communications and entertainment medium. These facts lead us to conclude that activation of the audience and augmentation of familial (parental) control have been amongst the most important impacts of the new medium (see, for instance; Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989; Gray, 1992; Levy & Fisk, 1984; Lin, 1990). The increases in audience activity and familial control are part of the audience reactions toward the uses of the VCR technology -particularly diversification of the obtainable content. Audiences around the world have responded to the VCRs’ abilities in various ways which could be categorised under two broad strategies: of rejection or adaptation and integration (Schoenbach & Becker, 1989). Rejection is usually attributable to the ability of the technology to extend the media content to a far wider range of material than what people used to watch or believe to be as healthy. This is developed in Chapter 6.

Also, an interesting result of the VCR penetration is the creation of supply and maintenance organisation of the VCR sets and tapes. It is apparent that VCR universally was introduced into a relatively unorganised environment. But, differences in the prior adaptability and posterior compatibility -i.e., reactions and policies- of countries shaped the nature of their VCR organisation. Therefore, depending on its legal position, VCR required and developed its own formal *or* informal organisations for supplying sets, tapes, and needed services. In some media-rich (developed and Third World) countries where the VCR was legal, government and industry policies for its production have developed. Also, in these countries a profitable network of video rentals (clubs or libraries) as well as VCR-related publications have developed since the early stages of the VCR boom in the early 1980s. For example, in the mid-1980s in Britain, the video rentals which were initially mainly converted small shops were put under the control of larger and well-established outlets. Also *Video Today* and *Video World* were two consumer-oriented VCR-related magazines which published information about hardware and software developments in the market (Gray, 1992). But, in other -mainly but not exclusively developing- countries that confronted the VCR with legal restriction and prohibition policies, the VCR phenomena gradually developed its informal, illegal, and uncontrollable organisation.

Socio-cultural and socio-political implications

It has been widely claimed that VCR and the usage of diversified media content through the technology have had significant impacts on the political, cultural, and economic issues in the developing countries. However, it has been noted that the literature on the socio-cultural and socio-political implications of VCRs in the Third World are “scarce, scattered, impressionistic and for fascination and schizophrenic reading”. And also “much of it is anecdotal or theoretical, with very few systematic studies” (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 32). However, the limited studies seem to suggest particular, though in some cases geographically limited, findings. “The results are varied, from relatively minor to heavy, depending on use and content. In some countries, VCRs have revolutionised media habits, broadcast systems, and even political systems. In others, they

represent only a moderate extension of entertainment media. In yet others, VCR diffusion is so limited that no impact is discernible” (Ibid.: 4).

It is certain that VCR has profoundly changed entertainment and leisure activities in most of the Third World. In this context, VCR has been blamed for aggravation of the sedentary and non-public nature of the contemporary man: in Gubern’s (1985)¹⁰ terms, the newly emerging *Homo Otiosus* (leisure man) and *Homo Electronicus* (electronic man). VCRs have the potential for diversification of content and decentralisation of source, and also they empower the audiences to make decisions on the context, time and place of viewing. This potential provides a relatively cheap and more effective means for a more satisfactory media consumption inside the home and family.

Another evident impact of VCRs is to be found in the life, values, and function of families around the world, although these effects are yet to be scientifically explored (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989). It is certain that VCR, in one way or another, has changed media usage of family members. The new media environment requires and facilitates a higher level of parental activity and parental control. VCRs have also “slightly closed the information gap between men and women” (Ibid.: 142). More importantly, children and adolescents of the 1980s and 1990s, the “first VCR generation” (Greenberg & Heeter, 1987), have access to politically incorrect, culturally marginal, and/or morally unconventional programming. This fact certainly has had some effect in their perceptions of societal phenomena and their socialisation. Also, VCRs’ impact on family unification and cohesion or, conversely, family segmentation has been observed in various research (e.g., Gubern, 1985). These findings indicate that, depending on the type and social structure of the family, VCR may increase familial conversation and interaction and so strengthen family ties in the developing countries where families are usually extended and valued.

Similarly, the possible impact of VCRs on literacy, reading habits, and education has divided critics and policy-makers. According to Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989), some have claimed that video provides an alternative to reading and so it adversely affects literacy, while others refer to the numerous examples of video programmes that enhance literacy. The cultural, agricultural, sexual, and professional education of the public and,

¹⁰ As quoted in Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) and Gunter & Levy (1987).

particularly, the underprivileged groups (e.g., rural population and women) have all been attributed to VCRs' utilisation. Also, governments have incomparably evaluated these effects. In the developing countries, where media broadcast is considered as the main channel of development and cultural and political education, VCRs' potential to increase entertainment and decrease educational tendencies have created strong tensions. For instance, the Chinese government "is worried about the public's exposure to fictional material that it has not cleared, and that when viewed by the uneducated, may be taken for reality" (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 141).

VCRs also have had some -though diverse and dubious- socio-economic effects in the developing countries. They have created yet another underground business and, therefore, have made the illegal smuggling networks richer and stronger. New occupations have been created for video rental owners and videocassette door-to-door distributors, as *shanta* men in Egypt (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989). VCRs have affected the revenues of national and international film and broadcasting industries as well. While the establishment of legal cassette distribution outlets have increased movie industry incomes, widespread piracy has 'contributed' to the decline of box office revenue. Further, because of the diverse and abundant material imported for the VCR, governmental investments for the production of domestic broadcast has inevitably increased in many countries (Ogan, 1989).

Furthermore, differing opinions exist about VCRs' potential effects on social classes. The presumptuous evaluations vary from unification to segregation and alienation of social classes. Also, it seems that a low or high rate of VCRs' penetration may foster various negative effects. On the one hand, being an upper class product, they may reinforce cultural distinctions and alienation of social classes and so intensify already severe social conflicts (see, e.g., Agrawal, 1986; Joulry, 1985; Oliveira, 1986). On the other hand, being a widespread product, they may raise economic and cultural expectations and, consequently, may increase frustration and political unrest (e.g., Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

As a mass medium that can transform 'power' structures and bases, VCR certainly has an overlapping domain with politics -both national and international. By providing alternative messages, VCRs have the potential to affect the ideological-cultural

foundations of power in societies. VCRs can be used to disseminate internal or external - different, if not necessarily rival- political ideologies. For instance during the early 1980s, as Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) discuss, VCR was closely related to the Islamic fundamentalism and expansion of the Iranian Revolution in the Middle East. During these years VCRs influenced domestic and foreign politics of the countries in the region. They were used for circulation of religious and political opinions which represented opposition ideologies and fostered political opposition. Also, as Ganley & Ganley (1987) point out about Saudi Arabia, the circulation of offensive material increased public demand for a more restrict control by the state. These demands weakened internal conservative factions and finally resulted in Saudi law enforcement being more rigid as a reaction to the introduction of new political ideologies through VCR content.

VCRs can also supply national ethno-linguistic minorities with programmes that do not correspond to the dominant hierarchical structure of identities. Though a global implication¹¹, VCRs have affected Third World nations more seriously in this respect. This is because most of the developing nations have very limited media channels and, ironically, are multilingual and multiethnic -and yet many are newly emerged nation-states. These realities highlight the importance of VCRs to the question of power structure in the developing countries. For example, the penetration of Chinese-language programmes from Hong Kong and Taiwan among the Chinese minorities in Malaysia and Indonesia has been troublesome. The governments of these countries are worried that these programmes would reorient their minorities to China and so, by segmenting broadcast audiences, may impede their national cultures and identities (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989).

Regarding the wide range of perceived implications attributed to VCRs, many critics have concluded that the technology has facilitated or reinforced the “cultural invasion” of Third World countries. For example Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989) suggest that VCRs provide easy access to the Western produced content which, more effectively than previous media, lead “to the decimation of local traditional and folk forms, homogenisation, and lack of cultural autonomy”. Since the early 1980s with the beginning of high home penetration of the VCR, many countries have expressed their worries about the role of VCR in invasion of their countries by Western culture. For example, Ganley &

¹¹ For instance, Dobrow (1989) discusses the VCR use of minorities in America to watch ethnic video material and its effects on their identities and on ‘narrowcasting’ of communications media.

Ganley (1986) reported that a 1983 Reuters survey found that of fifteen Asian countries only Japan did not express VCR-inspired threat of cultural invasion.

Government policies

During the early years of the 1980s a number of governments in the Third World and even some developed countries (e.g., USSR and France) tried to resist the penetration of VCRs and videocassettes. They imposed restrictions or radical prohibition on the imports and free circulation of video sets and cassettes. In some countries the policies were adopted more for economic reasons, while in others cultural and political reasons usually prevailed. Also, restrictions were occasionally imposed in order to maintain national broadcasting and movie industries. Undoubtedly, the overlapping of these economic, political, cultural, and media reasons in some countries has generated extreme cases of resistance against VCRs. In this context, the Muslim World in particular has been distinctive. Several writers (See, e.g., Boyd & Straubhaar, 1985; Boyd, 1985 & 1987; Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989; Ganley & Ganley, 1986 & 1987; Lent, 1985; and Levy, 1987 & 1989 among others) have noted that in Muslim countries public and pressure groups (namely religious authorities) from the outset expressed their concerns with the dominant video content and its potential effects. With the increasing penetration of VCRs the authorities in Muslim countries were extremely worried about pornography, obscenity, excessive violence, consumerism, and commercialism, and disrespect to religion and authorities. These anxieties were translated into restrictive government policies in many countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Also, in the same countries political concerns and the potential implications of VCRs were prominent. (Consider the dissemination of foreign programmes among the Chinese minorities in the first two countries and the diffusion of Shi'ite fundamentalist messages in Saudi Arabia.)

But, as Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent (1989: 38) among others have claimed, these policies only raised the prices and finally failed to achieve any goals. This failure is attributed to the huge supplies by the underground groups, the international reduction of prices, the increasing penetration of VCRs, public's reluctance to cooperate with the authorities, and the large number of legal or illegal rentals. However, by the mid-1980s many international scholars as well as policy-makers in many countries had realised the

inefficiency of restrictive policies. For instance, Ganley and Ganley (1987) in their study in the mid-1980s found that “with the exception of Iran, some major communist countries, and Malaysia and Indonesia, governments [indicated] general frustration and rather minor perceived threat” (80). These authors also claimed that the failure was a result of the ‘breakdown’ of the authoritarian states that had imposed restrictive policies on media consumption. Consequently, by the late 1980s and after almost one decade of challenge some countries such as India changed their policies. These countries “eventually stopped trying to keep VCRs out for political and cultural reasons and [...] moved to more economic concerns about reducing imports” (Boyd, Straubhaar & Lent, 1989: 15) and developing domestic industries.

Having examined a range of issues related to the possible impacts of VCRs, I now move to my case study of Iran, developing the historical and cultural context within which VCRs emerged.

Chapter III

Iran: Islam, the West & Modernisation

This chapter provides a brief background to the Islamic Revolution of 1977-79 in Iran. This introduction deals with the Iranian-Islamic tradition and its modernisation process during the past two centuries. In particular, the development of modern mass media (press since the 1840s and broadcasting since 1940s) is discussed here. The modern mass media and its 'modernising', Western content during the 1960s and 1970s, along social, economic, and political lines, were crucial in the creation of the Islamic uprising of 1977-79. After the introduction, the chapter is divided into three parts which deal with the Qajar era, the Pahlavi era, and the Revolution.

Introduction

Iran is located in south-western Asia, between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. Since pre-historic times, Iran has always been at the cross-roads of the Orient and the Occident, and therefore, a scene of clashes between various innovations and revelations; fall and rise or death and birth of human civilisations. As centuries changed, its geological position as well as its vast cultural and material resources have attracted fateful friends or fatal foes. "From the dawn of history it is this land bridge between the Middle East and Central Asia which has been the melting-pot of races and civilisations" (Heikal, 1981:13).

Iran is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious country, although during time the religious diversity has slowly decreased in favour of Muslims (particularly Shi'ites). Nowadays, Christians (with two ethno-linguistic groups Assyrians and Armenians), Jews and Zoroastrians altogether make up less than 2% of the population.¹²

¹² Based on Higgins's estimates for the early 1980s. His estimates are based on several census statistics (1956, 1966, and 1976) and adjustments have been made in light of other, often contradictory, sources (Higgins, 1984: 48).

Moreover, several different -but closely linked- languages and dialects are used by almost the same number of ethnic minorities (e.g., Turks, Kurds, Lurs, Qashga'is, Baluchis and so on). Roughly half the population speaks the official language (Farsi) as their first language, while the others learn and speak at least one other language than Farsi in their families and local communities. Several other ethno-linguistic minorities make up strong parts of this cultural mosaic of Iran.

Compared to other countries, Iran has a diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic population, and lacks a strong mainstream majority except in the case of religion. Shi'i Muslims make up 90 per cent of the population, and including all Muslims, the primary religious identification group makes up 97 per cent of the population (Higgins, 1984). However, Iran's main identity system lies in the religious ground and, increasingly, in favour of Shi'ism. In 1990, out of a total population of 52 million, 43 million were Shi'ites who represent "the great centre of Shi'ite Islam [and] possess the strongest and certainly the most homogenous Shi'ite community" in the world (Richard, 1995: 2). But it is not an ethnic and linguistic homogeneity. While almost all Persian and Turkish-speaking groups (including all the Azeris) and most of the Arabic-speaking minority are Shi'ites, the majority of Kurds, Baluchis, and Turkomans are Sunnis.¹³

Qajar dynasty: 1785-1925

Iranian-Islamic Civilisation

Though predominantly a Muslim country, Iran differs in many ways from other Muslim countries. From the beginning of the Arab-Islamic era in the 8th century, Iranians preferred to remain independent, culturally as well as politically. While they freely adopted Islam as a liberating religion, and willingly accepted Islamic theology and morality, Iranians rejected Arabism and tried to preserve part of their pre-Islamic culture; such as, language(s), governance system, national myths or symbols, and social customs (see, e.g., Keddie, 1981). Therefore, Iranian civilisation from the beginning of the 8th century coexisted along with the Arab empire and while the latter has always

¹³ For more information and statistics on the characteristics of the population of Iran see, for example: Aghajanian (1983), Helfgott (1980), Higgins (1984), and on the Shi'ite population throughout the world see e.g., Momen (1985), Richard (1995: 1-4); and several articles in Kramer (ed.) (1987).

been dominated by Sunnis, the former showed a greater sympathy and understanding for the pillars of Shi'ism¹⁴. Shi'ism in Iran, in one form or another, has increasingly gained importance and finally by the accession of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) became the official religion of Iran.¹⁵

Before its encounters with the European civilisation from the seventeenth century onwards, Iranian tradition was a combination of two main, historically developing, components: Iranian and Islamic traditions. The ancient Iranian culture provided most of Iran's linguistic, mythological, and (socio-political) ideological characteristics while, on the other hand, the Islamic culture enriched the country with its theology, mysticism, morality as well as its socio-political teachings (see, e.g., Keddie, 1981).

As many scholars have suggested, Iranian society until the nineteenth century always showed a mutual understanding between religious and political hierarchies on the management of social, cultural, and even political affairs. This was particularly true in the time of Safavid dynasty (1501-1722), where every effort was made to bridge the possible gaps between the divine and mundane power structures. During this period, the functioning of societal affairs was only possible under authority of politically active religious or religiously approved political figures.

But, during (and precisely toward the end of) the nineteenth century the relationship between the state and the ulama (religious authorities) deteriorated. This era coincided with the establishment of Qajar dynasty (1796-1925) and also the 'age of colonialism'. During this period a spreading rupture emerged between the Qajar state and the 'Islamic politics' (i.e., theological doctrines of legitimacy of power and also the clerical social status). The deterioration of relations was due to new evolutions in the Shi'i political doctrines and its clerical hierarchy; as well as due to the nature of the Qajar rulership (Algar: 1969).

¹⁴ Shiites constitute the minority among Muslims with political and theological inconsistencies with the majority Sunnis. Shi'ism was established after the death of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) supporting the succession of Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, and his descendants to the leadership of the Muslim community.

¹⁵ On this see, for instance, Arjomand (1981), Bashiriyeh (1984), Keddie (1981), Mazzaouri (1972), and Algar (1969) among others.

During the Qajar dynasty, as Bashiriyeh (1984: 8) argues, the absolutist state structure disintegrated due to “compounded external and internal causes”. The internal factor was the emergence of new “classes with independent sources of power and wealth [landed classes, the mercantile bourgeoisie and the clergy]” which in itself was generated or strengthened by the external factors. According to Bashiriyeh, during this period Iran’s incorporation into the capitalist economic system (Western imperialism) and the subsequent growth in foreign trade were major factors behind the disintegration of the state. The power of the clergy increased as a result of the expansion of world capitalist economy and dependence of the state on foreign powers. Their opposition to the Western penetration and the secularisation of traditional institutions presented them “as the proponents of the rising indigenous nationalism which was expressed in terms of Islam. Thus, the increasing power and opposition of the Ulama were more functions of rising nationalism in the face of Western imperialism than the imperatives of Shi’ite political theory” (9).¹⁶

While accepting the role of the external factors, other scholars stress on the theological evolutions during the second half of the nineteenth century. For instance, Algar (1969) believes that a new development in the political doctrines of Shi’ism together with some changes in the clerical hierarchy had a major effect on the disintegration of the traditional state structure and the introduction of alternate Islamic political ideology. Similarly, Bayat (1982) argues that toward the end of the century “modern social forces and concepts [imported from the West and developed within the Shi’a dissent schools of thought inside Iran] reactivated doctrinal considerations among certain, by no means all, circles of religious leaders, and transformed the official Shi’a stand from acquiescence to political activism” (pp. xii-xiii).

Here, it seems useful to mention very briefly that almost all Islamic traditions and sects have always been, less or more, involved with politics and issues of social administration. This historical involvement has been attributed to the nature of Islam. It has been widely claimed that the main characteristic of Islam, compared to other monotheistic religions, is that it provides a frame of laws for social life and is not merely a religion of worship and individual relationship with God. The Islamic law appeals to

¹⁶ For detailed discussions see Kazemzadeh (1968) and numerous works of N.R. Keddie.

the rational and emotional consciousness of the individual as well as collectivities in their relations with themselves, others, and communities as a whole (e.g., Heikal, 1981). The social responsibility of true believers is what matters in belief. This characteristic of Islam is the main source of its strength and the generator of its mobilising power. Therefore, throughout the history of the Muslim World the religious and political power structures have pursued a common ground -if not necessarily the subordination of the latter by the former.¹⁷

Early Contacts with the West

Expansion of the European civilisation (by military or missionary campaigns) throughout the Muslim World (in the North Africa, Middle East and Asia -the biggest part of the Ancient World) can be traced back to as early as the seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, Iran, like the rest of the Muslim World had had its first encounters with the new civilisation. These contacts and mainly the constant defeats of the Muslim countries by European powers had presented painful but invaluable lessons about international power imbalance (Bashiriyeh, 1984).

Following the early contacts, different secular and religious groups in Iran advocated 'reformist' policies. Political thinkers and activists were completely, though generally impotently, preoccupied with the backwardness of the society and, therefore, with its proper modernisation process. Intellectuals were battling this relative backwardness or even 'degeneration', mainly on the bases of the same doctrinal views which had presented the Europeans their superiority. A great number of governmental and independent reformers attempted modernisation from above. They followed in part the example of the Ottoman Empire and were concerned with primarily military and then political, industrial and educational reforms. These reforms required more effective political centralisation at the expense of elites and local authorities (Keddie, 1981).

Before 1890 most Western-educated reformists were rather hostile to the ulama. But the ulama gradually emerged as effective opponents of Iran's subordination by the foreigners and, therefore, "[f]rom 1890 through 1912 there was some reconciliation

¹⁷ For more discussions about the changes in the theological foundation of the political thought of the Ulama and contradicting theological doctrines during the period see Algar (1969); Bayat (1982); Keddie (1966; 1972; 1981).

between secularists and ulama to the regime's policies" (Keddie, 1981: 64). During this period, the religious authorities became increasingly involved in political protests and some of them even advocated 'Islamic' doctrines in the issues of modernisation and political reforms. For most of the ulama the only acceptable answer to the evils of the society and its backwardness, as Heikal (1981:27) puts it, was "a return to the true spirit of Islam". Heikal also notes that this trend was not limited to Iran but that most of the Muslim World experienced similar "movements of puritan fundamentalism", such as Wahhabis, Sanussis, and Mahdiyya in Arabia, Libya, and Sudan respectively.¹⁸

In Iran the bitter presence of the then two great European powers, Britain and Russia, and their interference in domestic affairs was a major factor behind the social and political unrest. Their fight over Iran's geopolitical position and natural resources could only be stopped by their own will or as a result of their own domestic problems. The interference of Britain and Russia in Iran's internal and foreign affairs was not limited to its political affairs but all important economic and military decisions were made in their Embassies or at least by their closest internal allies. This was interpreted by the dissenting secular and religious politicians as a wholesale of independence of the country.

Economically, for instance, several concessions were awarded to foreigners in order to import modern technology and developmental infrastructure; e.g., in 1872 to Baron Julius de Reuter and in 1890 to G. F. Talbot. These concessions were considered as "most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of [the] kingdom into foreign hands" (Heikal, 1981: 28) and therefore, resulted in widespread resentment and finally were cancelled. Although, conflicting interests between the foreign powers and some counter-campaigns by the pressure groups within various departments of the government were a main force behind the protests, mass resentment had enormous psychological effects on the nation. In all occasions, an alliance of religious authorities and reformist intellectuals existed which was only made possible by the growing national consciousness. This consciousness and the existing alliance of the powerful social activists were essential for the great exercise of national reformist demands during the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 (Keddie, 1981).

¹⁸ In Iran Babism and Baha'ism have been mentioned in this regard. See, for example, Bayat (1982) and Keddie (1981).

However, the Revolution of 1906 which was led by an alliance of religious and secular anti-despotist reformists failed dramatically. The failure was partially because the leaders had less or more relied on the cooperation of Britain and had not realised that British and Russian colonialists would prefer to deal with each other and not with an independent and powerful nation. In order to crash the Revolutionary demands for freedom, independence, and ('indigenous') modernisation, once again the foreign powers backed the internal dictators. The reign of the reformist parliament (*Majlis*) lasted only a little more than a year. The super powers shared the benefits of their counter-revolutionary alliance and divided Iran into three parts. Thus, another attempt for political reform came only after the temporary absence of Russia from inter-colonial struggle over the country. This was due to the Russian Revolution in 1917 (Heikal, 1981; Keddie, 1981).

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, some modern technologies were imported and several developmental organisations were established in Iran. As modernisation was carried out in medical, military, education, banking, industrial production, commercial, and governance systems, the fabric of the society was undergoing profound changes. Similarly, communications systems and transportation infrastructures were introduced in the society and served as part and parcels of the motor of the (r)evolution.

The diffusion of Western technologies in Iran (modernisation) was implemented from above and therefore did not reflect popular needs nor was it entirely approved by many sectors of the religious and secular nationalist forces. The main modernising forces were foreign imperialist powers who became aware of the key role of the modern technologies in the process of colonialism (Keddie, 1981). "Iran, though never directly colonised, lay on the path of many imperial interests and thus became a site of considerable interimperial rivalry for influence over and involvement in the building up of Iran's infrastructure in a manner more closely linked to great power needs than to those of Iranian society at large" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 44). The modernising imperialism allied with the weak shahs of Qajar dynasty. This alliance was necessary for the implementation of modern technologies which in turn met the great powers' needs as well as the despotic desires of the internal authorities. Thus, the

experience of the early modern technologies in Iran created a feeling of suspicion towards the aims of technological development.

The development of the transportation and communication systems which started as early as the 1840s reveal similar points. These technologies mainly benefited the imperialist powers and functioned as central government's means for authoritative control. As Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi discuss, "the advent of the telegraph, the telephone, and the postal service illustrate the interplay of imperial interest and regal power in the path to the modernisation of Iran"(1994: 44).

Introduction of Modern Mass Media (Press)

From the outset, the print media in Iran was initiated by the government. *Kaghaz-e Akhbar*, the very first newspaper in Iran, was published in 1837 following the Qajar Mohammad shah's order. Establishment of the press in Iran was a naive imitation of Western countries with the primary aim of propagating the royal circle. The king had observed that in the European countries newspapers were effective means of political propagation and persuasion. Therefore, the front and all other pages of *Kaghaz-e Akhbar* were largely devoted to the 'glorious Qajar court', the kings' journeys in the 'European Wonderland', and the sacrifices of the elite for the sake of the nation! It was no surprise that all reference to the kings' names was accompanied with an enormous number of royal titles and epithets. Fourteen such titles appear in a forty column news article on the front page of the very first issue of the first Iranian newspaper (Mohsenian-Rad, 1992[1371]). This is probably more than ironic that not only the print media was imitated but also censorship was learnt from the European countries.¹⁹

Consequently, the history of the Iranian press of the Qajar era reveals a profound structural paradox: the expectations of the government for a quietist press, on the one hand, and the existence of a very strong belief among the journalists in their social responsibilities, on the other hand. This paradox resulted in the relative absence of a

¹⁹ The (hi)story of the introduction of censorship in Iran appears in *E'temad-os Saltane*'s autobiography (reprinted in Mohsenian-Rad, 1992[1371]). According to him, when the Shah was angered by a satirical poem *E'temad-os Saltane* who knew about the existence of censorship in Europe suggested to establish such controls in Iran. Then, *E'temad-os Saltane* himself became the first head of Press and Censorship Department of the government.

'legal *and* free press'. The anti-governmental activities of the journalists were reinforced by their religious and political ideologies and, therefore, increased the general demand for freedom. A great number of the intellectuals were working as journalists and had discovered the value of private newspapers for the purpose of disseminating their 'liberating' (reformist or revolutionary) messages in the larger society.

The gradual development of private and usually critical press met with an increasing censorship. The more the publishing technology became a vehicle for public education and mobilisation against the status quo, the more the authoritarian structure expanded control mechanisms around the agents of change. Execution, imprisonment, and exile were ordinary punishments for the crimes of the journalists (Keddie, 1981). Increasingly, this was their fate if the journalists were not frightened by the state of terror and assassinations, or had not accepted rewarded cooperation or voluntary life in exile²⁰ as alternative ways. The first trial of a journalist in Iran was held in 1907 with the allegation of publishing five articles critical of the internal and external policies of the government. Although the trial was interrupted at that time, the journalist in question was assassinated a couple of months later.²¹ The first assassination of a journalist in Iran had occurred in 1895 and was followed by many others especially during periods of massive upheaval and agitation (e.g., in 1901, 1906, 1919, 1924, and 1925).

Briefly speaking, the history of the Iranian press has been the continuation of one rule: the more powerful the central authoritarian government, the more aggressive the repression, and the weaker the free press. Therefore, free and critical press in Iran has occurred only in short intervals between longer periods of forceful suppression. In other words, more than 90 per cent of the history of the press in Iran seen censorship (both preventive and punitive methods), while the remaining time has witnessed naive, scurrilous, and destructive journalism or has been dominated by self-censored journalists (Mohsenian-Rad, 1992 [1371]).

²⁰ It is worth mentioning that between 1837 and 1900, there were 22 Iranian émigré newspapers (i.e., mainly in Persian language and devoted to Iranian affairs) being published in India (including now Pakistan); Ottoman Empire (now Turkey and Egypt), France and so on. Also in the period of 1900-1912 another 22 newspapers were launched outside Iranian territory (Mowlana, 1989, of which a Persian translation is printed in *Rasaneh*, 1(2): 22-33, 1990 [1369]).

²¹ For accounts of the first trial of a journalist in Iran see, e.g., Moqqadam-Far (1991 [1370]) and of the assassination of the same journalist see, for instance, Sadri-Tabatabai (1993 [1371]).

During the last decades of the Qajar era, several modernisation projects faced severe resistance from the public or from various interest groups and were cancelled or modified. Despite this fact, it is possible to analyse some key characteristics as well as consequences of these technological changes in the communications systems of Iran.²² These technologies were imported, laid and supervised by foreign powers and were occasionally run by specific groups (e.g., Armenians who worked in telegraph stations). These technologies were developed as crucial instruments to guarantee the interests of the great powers not only in the country but in the whole region, and when established, became the most precious interests of the external powers.²³ Central government of Iran advocated the technologies merely for immediate financial benefits and also because of their potential for a more effective, centralised political control. The government utilised them to extend its control over the far provinces and remote areas. Therefore, these technologies from the outset were not meant to, and did not, serve the Iranian national interests. As a result of this early centralisation of government, local authorities lost their power and participated in the public unrest against the authoritarian central government.

As far as the development of technological innovations is considered, the modernisation of Iran under the Qajar dynasty brought about dubious results and so was met with contradictory reactions in the society. While some welcomed these technologies, many realised the profound complexity of their potential and actual political functions. These technologies gradually attached Iran to the other parts of the globe. In one way or another, they increased the national consciousness by carrying news from and to the country and by facilitating further involvement of the great powers in the internal affairs of the country. At the national level, these technologies bridged the geographical and cultural distances between various regions. They also bridged the gap between the intellectuals and the masses by distributing new ideas among larger groups of the public. The unifying impacts of the interpersonal and mass media during the 1850-1920 facilitated an almost unprecedented awareness among the nation of the state of their country. The public was repeatedly mobilised under the leadership of an alliance of

²² However, this analysis is not limited to this sector and can be attributed to all technological spheres.

²³ For example, "from the mid-1860s until the end of the Qajar period the Indo-European telegraph was Britain's most precious interest in Persia, outranking in importance the Imperial bank, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company"(Wright, 1977: 128 as quoted in Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 45).

secular and religious figures. The national unity frequently produced widespread agitation and excitement in 1891, 1906, and 1919-20.

It can be concluded that, Iran entered the twentieth century preoccupied with the question of modernisation and development. Historically, Iran's modernisation was initiated and manipulated by imperialist great powers with support from domestic suppressive and authoritarian powerful elite. The transfer of developmental technologies, consequently, implied and reinforced the power imbalance and the interrelationships of the superior and the inferior. These historical facts have lingered in the collective memory of the nation and have proved to be lasting legacies. Thus, the history of twentieth century Iran has been somehow a repetition of its perception of the international civilisational imbalance. Those inherited conceptions of the early core-periphery interrelations of the nineteenth century were translated later into more complicated perceptions and deep-rooted emotions: "Superiority was transformed into an often quite unreasonable sense of foreign, especially British, power and influence inside Iran; inferiority was translated into an unreasonable acceptance of anything that come from abroad (while resenting its appearance) and a consequent devaluing of Iranian culture and habits." (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 49). Therefore, Iran while never denied the necessity of transfer of technology for development, it has not been able to mastermind and achieve its own technological development and socio-cultural modernisation, nor has ever been able to tolerate the uninvited cultural results of the Western-inspired technological transformations. Iran's hesitation in its path to modernity has reinforced the yet challenging and yet unrealised notion of the "third path": an indigenous Islamic, Iranian, modernity which is coherent with and does not undermine the invaluable parts of its tradition.

Pahlavi Dynasty: Modernisation From Above

Reza Shah: 1920-1940

After the withdrawal of Tsarist Russia from Iran in 1917, the reformist forces of Iranian society were left with a chance to establish a democratic state. Liberalist, nationalist, and religious groups had only one common aim: transforming the status quo into an 'independently and justly progressive society'. The movement was

constitutionalist, but the republican campaign failed to gain credit and finally a Cossack Brigade officer, *Reza Khan*, seized power in 1920. Finally, the chaotic years of early the 1920s in Iran came to a crucial point in 1925 when the Pahlavi dynasty was founded by *Reza Shah*.

Reza Shah very soon developed a totalitarian centralised state. Confronting and destroying all regional and tribal, liberal, intellectual, secular, and religious opposition, he proclaimed absolute legitimacy based on and inherited from the pre-Islamic Imperial Persia. This seemingly nationalistic state ideology was based on a glimpse of mythic nationality and combined with a brutal termination of all secular and religious political parties and activists resulted in generation of an aggressive modernising state. ‘Modernisation’ of economy, culture, and social administration was pushed forward rapidly and offensively from the top down. During his reign, 1925-1941, “‘oriental despotism’ was gradually introduced into Iran [...] in the form of Westernisation and modernisation” (Abrahamian, 1985: 125). Industrialisation and modernisation of the economy²⁴ “was marked with symbolic and nationalistic construction programmes” (Pesaran, 1985: 18). This plan heavily relied on an established state monopoly over foreign trade and domestic production of consumer and capital products and, accordingly, imposed the mechanisms of exchange and market controls.

Reza Shah’s general modernisation plan of Iran was fundamentally based on *Ataturk*’s Turkey and ideologically proved to be incompetent and alienating. It was carrying a paradox in its core: it perceived modernisation as a ‘nationalistic and secular’ process which supposedly had to link two imaginary geo-historical cultures. The mythic, glorified ancient Iranian culture (while disconnected from its historical context and future developments in the long Islamic era) was expected to progress toward the ‘imaginary’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 50) horizon of Western-style modernity. Therefore, “two contradictory cultural trends were set in motion. One harked back to an ancient Persian cultural heritage”, which was a historically deformed and subsequently malfunctional identity. “The other tendency looked outward beyond *Ataturk* to the contemporary West, to its technologies, way of life, and aesthetic styles.” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 50). Therefore, as some scholars

²⁴ For a detailed discussion on Iran’s economic development during Reza Shah’s reign, 1920-1940, see, for example, Banani (1961) and Katouzian (1981).

conclude, there seems a general consensus that Reza Shah's modernisation was carried out too rapidly and much that was 'old' (Iran's historical identity and tradition) was removed and not enough 'new' (a synthesis of modernity and tradition) was put in its place.

However, expansion of various bureaucratic structures facilitated development in sectors such as military and police forces, education, health, industry, trade, and also further development of transportation and communication systems. But, forceful cultural changes (for example, in clothing, civil planning and architecture, religious ceremonies, emancipation of women) left a great proportion of the public and the intelligentsia critical of the developments, feeling that individual rights as well as religiously-inspired social responsibilities have been violated. Modernisation was very costly in the terms of indigenous (nomadic, rural, and urban) cultures and traditions.²⁵ It only pleased small groups of Westernised elite who had strong ties with the nucleus of power and were mainly concentrated in Tehran.

Reza Shah exploited all economic and socio-political means to strengthen the national hegemony centred on the ancient Iranian and contemporary modernising sources of the legitimacy of the monarchy. Several factors justified the need for powerful propagation systems: diffusion of modernising slogans; modern 'patriotism'; establishment of nationhood and national unity; struggle against superstition; relative extinction of non-official ideologies; along with other needs of those early stages of national integrative process. Therefore, various public and mass communication systems developed and served as cohesive means of the totalitarian state. Various print media (e.g., magazines, newspapers, periodicals) were established, or forcefully harmonised with the official viewpoints, to orchestrate the messages and slogans shouted in public lectures and mass demonstrations. All these oral and print communication systems tended to reflect the same singular images of the world, the king, the country, and the audience's responsibilities within a nation-state under the process of modernisation.

Despite an increase in their number, diversity, and circulation and even the establishment of the first truly daily newspapers, the general situation of the press under Reza Shah, (1920-1940) was similar to that between the two constitutional revolutions

²⁵ For example, on the costs of modernisation for the nomadic population of Iran under Reza Shah see Avery (1965), Fazel (1985) and Upton (1960) among others.

(i.e., 1907-1919). After every step toward absolute power, he tightened subordination chains on the neck of the press and hence prepared the grounds for further domination. But as the time for his claim to the throne approached, incidents of journalists assassination and imprisonment increased dramatically. It is widely believed that the assassinations in 1924 and 1925 of two liberalist journalists were carried out under his direct orders (see, e.g., Beheshti-Pour, 1993 [1372]).

Very soon after the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 preventive and punitive methods of censorship were well developed. Patriotic and nationalistic content prevailed in the press with the aim of augmenting the politico-cultural hegemony. Accordingly, the press were banned from disseminating opponent ideological views or from critically discussing government policies and, above all, the King himself.²⁶ This period lacked any kind of associations organised by journalists, editors, writers, or print-house workers. The only organisations were what were known generally as “literary clubs” (*Anjoman(ha’y)-e Adabi*) and were devoted to periodical poem and story-reading sessions (Barzin, 1991[1370]).

To coordinate cultural and propaganda projects, the government constituted a new body called Office for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion (OEGPO) in January 1939.²⁷ The Office immediately developed various bureaus as well as its branches in provincial capital cities and undertook the role of the main policy maker in cultural matters. In 1940 and after the outbreak of World War II the OEGPO was replaced with the Department of Publications and Propagation (DPP) under direct supervision of the Prime Minister. The changes were made because of the need to preserve Iran’s neutral position in the conflict between its foreign partners. The Department consisted of all relevant offices detached from other ministries or organisations: for instance Pars News Agency from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various bureaus from the OEGPO, including press, music, public sermon, and Radio. The Department also launched the Supreme Council of Publications (Ashena, 1992 [1371]).

²⁶ For a detailed analysis on the history of Iranian Press under Reza Shah see, for example, Mowlana (1963) in English and Kohen (1983 [1362]) and Mohit-Tabatabai (1987[1366]) in Persian.

²⁷ *Sazeman-e Parvaresh-e Afkar*, in Persian. This could also be translated into Public Opinion Pedagogy Organisation. For more information see Ashena (1992 [1371]) and Mowlana (1963).

Reza Shah during the last years of his reign had established a strong relationship with Germany and apparently had learnt very much from Nazist and fascist ideologies. New developments in communication and propagation systems of this era are thought to have been influenced by German propaganda strategies. Therefore, Reza Shah's government eagerly planned for a national broadcasting system which finally came on April 24, 1940, when Radio Iran was inaugurated. In the 1930s a few hundred radio sets were brought in the country by the multi-lingual Tehran elite who bought them in Europe and used them to receive foreign stations. After the establishment of national radio, the number of radio sets rose to twenty thousand in 1940 and to sixty thousand in 1950 -roughly one set per three hundred people (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994).

Radio was perceived as a crucial instrument for the further development of the then well activated propaganda machine of the state, particularly in view of the high illiteracy rate and the dominance of oral culture in the country. As Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi conclude, "[r]adio was the first truly popular medium in Iran . It provided a means of potential ideological hegemony over the whole nation, fortifying Reza Shah's fundamental aim of creating a strong, centralised state, a unified Persian culture of the disparate ethnic elements. It was also a useful tool for disseminating modernising values and political rhetoric as well as staving off the foreign influences penetrating Iran. It served Reza Shah's geopolitical interests well" (1994: 51-52).

Briefly speaking, the reign of the first Pahlavi shah lasted as long as it was supported by British interference and was ended because of Reza Shah's miscalculations of the course of the World War II, and was replaced by his son, *Mohammad Reza Shah*. By mid-1941, Iran had developed an authoritarian government which had committed itself to the 'modernisation' of the then dominantly nomadic and agrarian society. Nevertheless, industrialisation of the economy and modernisation of culture and official politics seemed to rely on, and itself required further expansion of, nationalistic and monarchical ideology. This plan succeeded to a limited extent as far as the underlying ideology was able to attract, persuade, and activate the larger proportions of the public and the intelligentsia under the 'culture of modernity'. This was simply not possible. The nationalistic and monarchical modernising ideology was not the result of a historically

indigenous cultural process and, on the contrary, it was a forcibly aborted offshoot of a premature process of national integration. This ideology did not represent the majority of the public and was not compatible with their life-styles. It was based on material and spiritual interests of a small Westernised elite and, consequently, its modernisation plan theoretically and operationally faced resistance from various socio-political forces. Therefore, modernisation during 1920-1940 proceeded only with extensive use of two complementary tools: propaganda mechanism devoted to patriotic-monarchic ideology which were no more important than military and (secret) police forces. The propaganda machinery was established to justify the sacrifices and sufferings of the nation in the name of the requirements of 'patriotism, modernity, and progress'. It consisted of state-owned-and-run publications and radio broadcast along with a number of strictly censored private newspapers and magazines.

Freedom Under Seizure: 1941-1946

Iran's invasion in August 1941 by the British and Russian (and later American) forces put an end to the dictatorship of the central government. The relative absence of absolutism assisted the growth of the already fertile seeds of freedom and intellectual excitement in the society. Political parties and independent journalists increased pressure on over the government for a legitimate and legal freedom. But the powerless government was reluctant and even in November 28, 1942, the Prime Minister with his special authority granted by Martial Law banned all publications unlicensed and licensed. This lasted for forty-three days and during this period the government was authorised by the *Majlis* to regulate publications and prevent a further increase in the number or more diversification of the content of the press (Beheshti-Poor, 1993 [1372]). However, by August 1942 there were 50 newspapers which rose to 120 by the winter and to 200 by the next summer. This process continued in the following years and in 1945 more than 4,000 newspapers, magazines, and other publications were published throughout the country (Taheri, 1980: 13).

It is important to note that not all of the publications were politically and financially independent. The central government and all various political parties -which had sprung out sporadically- had their own publications. And even the invading British

and Russian forces and their embassies were directly publishing or were sponsoring publications of their favourite groups. Therefore, as Beheshti-Poor (1993 [1372]: 43) puts it as one of the main characteristics of the press in the period of 1941-1946 and the subsequent years until 1953, this period witnessed “an increase in receiving bribes, sponging, and extortion by the press. This was done either through publication of divulging or malicious accusations against the rich, the feudal, the factory owners, and famous figures, or through publication of flattering articles for the delight of Mohammad Reza Shah, the agents of the imperialists or other politicians.” He suggests that this period also showed a tendency toward collectivisation of ideas and polarisation of socio-political activities around various publications affiliated to the political groups.

Freedom and National Upheaval: 1947-1953

The end of World War II and the subsequent problematic withdrawal of the Allied forces from Iran only intensified the disputed issues of territorial integrity and oil concessions. Russian interests contradicted the British-American preferences in both matters. As a result, their internal forces inside Iran proposed differing policies within the formal political institutions (i.e., government and Majlis) as well as on the streets and in the newspapers. Despite the physical departure of the Russians from Azerbaijan and destruction of their puppet government in mid-December 1946 by the Iranian Army, Russia remained a crucial actor in Iranian politics through the communist forces inside the country. The oil problem was aggravated, and between 1949 and 1953 became the most severe national crises. Having the highest production rate in the world, Iran’s oil industry was under British control. The concession -which was awarded by Reza Shah to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) in 1933- had bestowed Iran’s greatest national asset and all related economic procedures to the British government.

By the beginning of 1950s, following one decade of unprecedented freedom of political activities and publication, the national awareness and the political life in Iran seemed to have a ‘clear’ base. This base mainly consisted of organised nationalist and religious groups, although the communist *Tudeh Party* from time to time played a role. With the weakness of the government, the presence of a strong dislike toward the British, and still fairly unsettled presence of the American forces in Iran, it was apparent

that an alliance of nationalist and religious forces could gain power and act independently against the interests of the old or new imperialists. This alliance emerged under the leadership of *Dr. Mohammad Mossaddeq*, the Prime Minister, and *Ayatollah Kashani*, a prominent religious leader. The main aim of the united forces was nationalisation of oil, Iran's greatest economic asset.

Finally, the Oil Nationalisation Law was passed on 20 March 1951 and resulted in further increase in tensions. It intensified the economic and political disputes between Iran and Britain and also increased the tension between Majlis, dominated by the nationalist and religious members, and the Shah and his court. The following economic hardship (which was a result of a boycott of Iran's exports); difficulties in international relations; and a violent domestic atmosphere resulted in a complicated and many-folded situation. In this situation all possible actors could find some useful pressure levels for their own benefits, or even could act finally against their own interests! The final outcome of this malaise did not please, and was not planned, by the people or the nationalist and religious (or even Communist) parties and it conspicuously served the foreign powers and their internal allies and in particular the monarch and his court.

Although the Nationalisation Movement had irregularly enjoyed the support of the communist Tudeh Party, it was mainly backed by the National Front whose two pillars of strength were the *Iran Party* and the *Mojahedin-e Islam Society*. The former was predominantly an organisation of salaried (professional and intellectual) modern middle class who had strong a nationalist and religious background while the latter was a society of traditional middle class *bazzaris* and *mullahs* (merchants and clergymen). These traditional and modern middle classes were assisted by the working class despite the fact that semi-industrialisation during Reza Shah's reign, and the expansion of communist ideology and the subsequent trade-union activities had increased class-consciousness in the society (Abrahamian, 1985).

Ultimately, on 19 August 1953 a coup was executed by Iranian military generals which in fact had been initiated by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the CIA. Therefore, once again in Iran, the international power structure had exploited outrageous means to preserve the global bi-polar structure and to abolish the deepening revolutionary, religious, and nationalistic awareness of a Third World nation. This CIA-

sponsored coup overthrow Dr. Mossaddeq and re-enestablished Mohammad Reza Shah in his absolutist position. This reversed the processes of democratisation of the country and nationalisation of its assets.

Rapid Dictatorial Modernisation: 1953-1979

The American-Shah's coup of 1953 very soon changed the dominating figures in Iranian politics. It also paved the way for a violent shift in the structure of the public sphere. It ended in a total reversal of the processes which could result in a firm establishment of the public sphere and individual rights, constructive freedom of expression, and democracy in the country. For example, in the short period of Dr. Mosaddeq's turbulent premiership (1950-1953) the government and police were directly ordered not to take any action against the critical press and the Majlis had passed a law on which bases any person over 30 years of age could apply for a publication license. Therefore, this short interval was to be remembered as the most legally secured time for social and political activities and particularly for free expression and publication in the contemporary history of Iran (Beheshti-Poor, 1993 [1372]). But, very soon after the coup all brutal means of preventive and punitive control were well in act to reverse the democratisation process and to eradicate the institutions of freedom in society. These mechanisms succeeded promptly in uprooting and suffocating the seeds of hope and the sparkles of intellect from the hearts and minds of the nation. All political parties and more impatiently the National Front -with its two powerful nationalist and religious pillars- along with the Tudeh Party were dismantled and pushed into a neutral existence underground.

Not surprisingly, once again execution, imprisonment, banishment and terrorisation became the totalitarian regime's deal with journalists. The press faced a newly empowered shah who in one hand had rewards for the willing accomplices and in the other punishments for the collaborators with 'his enemies'. Thus, several journalists were brutally tortured and executed in the aftermath of the 1953 coup. New laws were ratified with dubious applicabilities: on the one hand they demanded a recapitulation of all publication licenses under harsh conditions while, on the other hand, they contained seemingly democratic articles such as presence of a jury in all trials related to journalists'

transgression. Nevertheless, while the suppressing articles were in effect even before the ratification of the laws, the democratic mechanisms never gained credit and it was proved that the ultimate law was the shah's will and desire (Beheshti-Poor, 1993 [1372]). Another effect of the 1953 coup was that America gained absolute control in Iran. The United States had joined Britain and Russia during the World War II but after the coup remained with the monopoly of power. America's penetration had developed during the pre-1953 years and it increasingly advanced to full scale of Iran's cultural, political, economic and military dependency on America during the twenty-five years from 1953 till the 1978-79 revolution.²⁸

After the overthrow of Mosaddeq's government and the suppression of opposition, a new phase of centralised development was started. Several laws were ratified to attract and safeguard foreign investments in Iran.²⁹ Development and modernisation plans were simply similar to those of Reza Shah's period: dependent capitalist development, monarchical dictatorship and Westernisation of all spheres. These three primary characteristics lead us to the underlying features of the Iranian society during the subsequent twenty-five years. These changes are discussed here under economic, political, and, more importantly, cultural/mass media issues.

Economy

This period is characterised by the dualistic development policies based on an authoritarian, centralised planning system. These plans emphasised a handful of large and prestigious (agro-)industrial projects, but ignored the vast majority of the country. However, in the wake of the economic development during the 1960s and 1970s, members of the Shah's family and their associates like political and military elite entered the economic enterprises for a quick and easy profit. This "upper bourgeoisie was composed of some 150 families [...] who owned 67 per cent of all industries and financial institutions". Even more drastically, "out of the 473 largest private industries 370 were owned by ten families" (Bashiriye, 1984: 40). This gangster-like nature of

²⁸ For more details on American military and economic aids to Iran see, e.g., Pesaran (1985), Greaves (1977), Baldwin (1967), and Ramazani (1976).

²⁹ For instance, consider the 1954 Mutual Security Act with the USA and also the 1955 Law for the Attraction and Protection of Foreign Investment in Iran.

economic entrepreneurship had very damaging effects in social and political terms as well as in the economy. Unprecedented abuse of power for financial benefits created acute imbalances in the society and left the economy in the hands of the same small group of powerful elite.

In the early 1960s the government implemented Land Reforms which were pushed forward despite serious resistance from opposition groups, particularly the clergy (see Lambton, 1969; Keddie, 1972; Ajami, 1976, among others). These land reforms brought about a number of dramatic changes in rural areas and multiplied the consequences of the neglect of the agricultural sector. One of the effects of this situation, along the continued brutal suppression of the nomadic tribes, was an unprecedented increase in rural-urban migration. This resulted in a 50 per cent increase in urban population during the period 1966-1977. Therefore, while the total population of the country from a mere 19 million in 1956 increased to 35 million in 1978, the urban population tripled and mounted to more than 17m in 1978 compared to less than 6m in 1956. Also, the degree of urbanisation during a twenty-two years period increased more than 50 per cent and reached 48.8 per cent of the total population in 1978 (from 31.4 per cent in 1956). "Furthermore, most of the discontented migrants under the pull of the high and rising demand for labour, particularly for unskilled construction workers in urban centres eventually found their way into large overcrowded cities such as Tehran, Isfahan and Tabriz, thereby intensifying the already acute problems of traffic, housing, water shortage and air pollution in these politically important centres of population" (Pesaran, 1985: 29).

By the early 1970s, Iran's economic situation was alarming and some kind of economic stabilisation programme seemed inevitable. Meanwhile, the international oil-crisis of 1973 "increased Iran's 'per barrel' oil revenue from \$0.98 in January 1971 to \$9.49 in January 1974" (Pesaran, 1985: 31). Consequently, due to the Shah's ambitious dream for the 'Great Civilisation', and contrary to all socio-economic measures, the total expenditure of the Fifth Five Year Plan, 1973-78, was doubled and increased to \$69 billion. This revenue was used to extend the importation of capital and consumer goods and also to enlarge the dependent industrialisation rate -while the agricultural sector and the public services were neglected again. The lack of sufficient economic infra-structure (e.g., electric power, transportation facilities and skilled manpower)

disrupted industrial production, resulted in an increase in wages and also inflow of foreign work force -while other political and economic policies accelerated the flight of capital and professionals out of the country.

The subsequent voluminous foreign trade and the so-called industrialisation were controlled by the dependent comprador bourgeois with the aim of pursuing huge and quick economic profits. As a result, foreign trade was further dominated by imported consumer goods and industrialisation was further reduced to the sporadic expansion of “montage” industries. These phenomena in many ways deepened popular dissatisfaction on economic reasons, since the expansion of domestic demand for goods and services was far beyond the country’s production and import capacity. The subsequent high inflation rates (respectively 9.9, 16.6 and 25.1 in 1975, 1976 and 1977) fuelled the public frustrations. On the other hand, the domination of the montage industries extended Iran’s economic dependence on foreign, mainly American, mother industries for parts and design. This dependent industrialisation “made autonomous industrial development hard to achieve because of a continuing lack of adequate industrial experience and insufficient investment in technological research and development” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 61).

Polity

After the 1953 coup, all political parties and affiliated newspapers were disbanded by excessive use of brutal control. Thus, power was concentrated in the hands of the King and so formal politics became an absurd place in which no party played a role and not a single severe critical opinion was tolerated. The ‘no party/single all-powerful actor’ situation could not even tolerate critical opinions of independent intellectuals or politicians. The secular liberal-nationalist as well as Marxist groups were prevented from getting popular attention and simultaneously the Islamic political ideology was discredited on the grounds of separation of the realms of politics and religion.

By the late 1950s, the Shah felt secure enough to institute two new political parties (*Melliyn*, Nationalist Party, and *Mardom*, People’s Party). In doing so he aimed to assure the international public opinion of the democratic nature of the state and also

persuade the nation to accept the legitimacy of the coup government. But, these parties lacked “grass-roots support from any particular class or interest”(Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 60) and so did not represent any particular ideology. These parties, in fact, were political structures of the dependent, comprador bourgeois which controlled all crucial sources of power within the economic, political, military, and even formal cultural institutions. This very small group of extremely powerful families needed strong internal harmony which had to be centred around loyalty to the Shah and also it had to expand its hegemonising mechanisms in the society. Thus, the elite considered the political institutionalisation merely as one mechanism of hegemonisation under the absolute control of the state over all power bases.

During the Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign after the coup, 1953-1979, the excessive concentration of power was achieved and maintained by two other instruments. The Shah, advised by the CIA, relied heavily on propaganda and (secret) police to establish political consolidation. The secret police, the infamous SAVAK, was instituted and advised by the CIA and there were parallel organisations inside the armed forces and elsewhere. Suppression of the mass media (press, radio, cinema and later television) was another policy to gain and maintain political consolidation which, as discussed before, was achieved by extravagant use of various kinds of rewards and punishments under preventive and punitive censorship methods. This strict censorship was very effective in the extermination of political opposition of 1940s and 1950s and prevented free communication in the society which could result in popular consistent resistance during the following decades. Ironically this abrupt censorship was responsible for many absurdities in Iranian mass media. For instance, as Heikal (1981:70) reveals, “red ink could not be used by newspapers because it was the colour of communism and revolution, and no plays could be performed or published which in any way referred to the assassination of monarchs -not even *Hamlet*”.

The political propaganda was established on the bases of Reza Shah’s messages: patriotism, nationalistic monarchy and legitimacy of a modernising state. Mohammad Reza Shah very much proclaimed the same patriotic and monarchical charisma as his father, based on the same mythical history of the pre-Islamic era and even extended to more unrealistic horizons. He was to be obeyed unequivocally since he was the *Farmandeh*, the great commander of the army and whole nation, and also he was to be

regarded as the symbol of the nation's historic pride and dignity for he was the *Ariyamehr*, the light of the Aryans! In addition, the Shah was the heir of two important Iranian-Islamic historic titles: God's Shadow on Earth and at the same time the King of Kings, *Shahanshah*. Therefore, political propaganda was simply justification of the ongoing reality in the society: all power sources -wealth, industry, finance, fame, charisma, culture, army, police, and so on- were (to be) concentrated in the hands of the Shah or, with his consent, in the hands of the members of his royal family or other affiliate, in some cases the *nouveau riche* but, loyal families. The government's 'ideological rhetoric' was an artificial product of the monarchist, anti-national, quasi-intellectuals and was perceived by the opposition groups as not only against the more elaborated Islamic and even old Persian historical values and traditions but as contradicting the prerequisites of modernity and democracy -above all the rationality of collective identities.

The suppression of the opposition and the tremendous restriction of independent political activity worsened after the 1963 popular unrest. This revolt was orchestrated mainly by the clergy against the shah's 'White Revolution' which was found to contain some secular and anti-religious policies and also to be totally in the interest of the dependent comprador bourgeois class of the society and its foreign capitalist supporters. The White Revolution or, as the Shah proclaimed, the 'Shah-People Revolution' consisted of a six-point programme including land reforms, emancipation of women, and changes in the electoral laws. These points were evaluated as in opposition to Islamic economic and cultural rules. Consequently, Ayatollah Khomeini, a prominent religious leader of politically active Islam, protesting against the Revolution and the regime's overall corruption, led the masses. He also severely criticised the regime's cultural and economic policies and Iran's foreign relations (particularly with America and Israel). But, after the extremely fierce repression of the masses during the summer of 1963, he was banished from the country and the religious opposition was disbanded.

In 1975 the Shah changed his political strategy and introduced an abrupt one-party system in order to increase political participation. Thus, *Hezb-e Rastakhiz-e Melli* (National Resurgence Party) became the single political party of an unified and classless nation under the command of its Great Commander and everyone was expected to join (Mehrddad, 1979 quoted in Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 70). The Rastakhiz party had two "wings" and very soon developed its authority in society and

employed all communication channels to legitimise the new political structure. Moreover, “mass communication was considered by the regime as a substitute for real political communication” (Tehrani, 1980: 16) and participation of the public in politics. The party launched its own newspapers and also supervised some radio and television programmes.

Culture and Mass Media

During this period the formal culture, as the main source of support for the geo-historical expansion and continuity of the existing power structure, was perceived by the regime in accordance with its authoritarian, dependent, and monarchic nature. Modernisation of the country was perceived by the state as its biggest enterprise by which it could gain legitimacy internally and in the international arena. This was supported by the Shah himself. Due to lack of legitimacy on the bases of the indigenous culture, the state advocated the diffusion of Western social structures and cultural values and attitudes. Therefore, the Westernisation of the culture seemed inevitable to guarantee the survival of the state. It is worth noting that particularly during the 1960s and 1970s all Third World countries were enchanted by the dominant paradigm of development and modernisation theories in which “development was equated with modernisation, and modernisation was seen as a process of diffusion of Western social structures and values” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 4). In Iran, as in elsewhere, ‘modernisation’ was seen in contradiction with the ‘infertile traditional heritage’ of the nation and consequently, the modernising agent (the dependent, totalitarian state) sought all possible means to transform the pre-existing cultural attitudes and values into Western ideals.

Iran in this era rapidly underwent the dual cultural processes of extreme adaptation of Western culture (i.e., life-styles, attitudes, structures and values) and rejection of its own culture. In due process, the indigenous social structures and institutions were uprooted and the vacuum was filled with a mimetic, biased, and distorted image of the contemporary West. Having placed this skewed imagery of the Western ‘dreamland’ in the horizon, Iran’s modernisation plan neglected not only its own material and epistemic historical heritage but also that of the ‘West’. This dual

negligence pushed the society toward a sharp and shaky edge. The Western-styled transformation of economic, political, and educational institutions over-flowed and reflected in the then already discontented cultural sphere and by doing so, it multiplied the nation's identification crisis (see, e.g., Nirumand, 1969).

In Iran mass communications, mass education, and mass consumption, as Tehranian (1980: 8) suggests, were “the tertiary carriers of modernisation”. Given the lack of adequate institutions of social and political participation of individuals and associations in the national decision-making, these carriers resulted in “the triple tendencies of atomisation of society, centralisation of authority and control (including bureaucratisation of communication through the mass media), and homogenisation of culture.”

Among the tertiary carriers of modernisation, the totalitarian regime exploited more intensively and effectively the existing communications media and also the newly developed technologies. According to the modernisation theory, and particularly communications and development models, mass media was to be regarded as the most influential channel of diffusion of (though originally Western) modern attitudes and values in the society: rationality, progressivism, industrial consumerism, socio-psychological mobility, and political participation. Therefore, fully adapting this theoretical perspective, Iranian modernisation plan relied on the homogenising and disseminating power of mass media. But, the combination of erroneous theoretical inefficiency and undemocratic, autocratic nature of the state brought about disastrous results and transformed the integrity of the society and of its culture into a segmented, disordered and chaotic one. Briefly speaking, modernisation destroyed Iran's political and cultural independent ‘old (i.e., traditional) order’ which was based on morality and a sense of justice and replaced it with a ‘new (i.e., modern) disorder’. Accordingly, dignity, self-respect, and identity of the individual was injured by the subsequent alienation and ‘Westoxification’.

Press: Despite the suppression of the free press during the period, 1953-1978, professional journalism witnessed some improvements in terms of circulation and printing quality -partially because of increased literacy rate and technological improvements. But during this period, compared to the turbulent and yet free period of

1941-1953, fewer associations were established by and/or for the journalists, press owners, or other affiliated occupational groups. Almost all of the associations established in the 1970s were simple occupational unions or syndicates which, in the absence of proper welfare regulations, were pursuing welfare issues such as housing, unemployment and life insurance and so on.

Furthermore, post-1963 publication industry witnessed an enormous increase in the publication of religious magazines and pamphlets. These publications were in fact the new propaganda strategy of the religious opposition. This was an inevitable reaction not only to the bloody repression of 1963 religious upheavals but also against the increasing anti-religious activities of the socialist and communist groups. Also the anti-religious, consumerist, sexist, and irresponsibly quietist content of the government-controlled mass media had pushed the clergy to adopt print media as a modern and far-reaching channel to disseminate their political and cultural messages to a wider audience and particularly to the young generations.

Beheshti-Poor describes the Iranian press during the period of 1963-1978 which creates quite an unpleasant image as: (1) Unanimous cooperation of almost all managers, editors, license owners and most of the writers and journalists with the regime in a way that made them the most flattering advocates of the Shah's court. (2) Unrivalled domination of SAVAK over the lives and possessions of the journalists with collaboration of the Ministry of Information and Tourism. (3) Intensified censorship on not only the press but also on all mass media and writers and journalists as well as on books, public speeches, lectures, poem-readings, and even *Deh-Khoda's* encyclopaedia. (4) Unlimited increase in publication of flattering material for the delight of the government, politicians and senior members of Majlis who were closest associates of the Shah's court which itself was serving the imperialism. (5) Deterioration of critical articles to the level of the lowest satirical and entertaining writings which even in this form were not tolerated by the agents of the regime and would end in punishment of the journalists. Therefore, criticism could not be anything more than some joke-like comments on the third or fourth grade unsupported officials or district municipals. (6) Engagement of almost all the press in publication of unimportant matters which had very little to do with the social lives of the people and could not meet the needs of the society or even could divert their attention from real problems and solutions. (7) Extreme

domination of “professional (i.e., yellow) journalism” which resulted in marginalisation of truly nationalist and committed journalists and deprivation of society from their enlightening services while opportunists could gain wealth and high positions for their immoral conducts. (8) Fanatical sensitivity of all ranks of the government officials against the slightest critique and their extravagant reactions except in the case if they seemed to be beneficial in the internal clashes between the political ‘gangs’ (Beheshti-Poor, 1994: 72-73).

Beheshti-Poor also mentions eleven different preventive and punitive censorship methods which were implemented and carried out by SAVAK and/or the Ministry of Information and Tourism to control the press (pp. 74-75). Beside the departments which controlled the press, the Ministry of Art and Culture was involved in the censorship of films and books. It must be noted that in both those Ministries it was the security officers of SAVAK who were the real policy and decision-makers. “Books and films were censored or refused publication or showing for a variety of reasons, mostly in connection with claims about the security of the regime and the inviolability of the monarch Sometimes the prohibitions took an arbitrary, or sinister, or even comical turn” (Tehrani, 1980: 15). For example, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* for having a scene of assassination of a king and red colour for having communist and revolutionary connotations were prohibited or treated with circumspection.

Radio and Television: Iranian Radio, established in 1940, developed rapidly after the 1953 coup and by 1961 it had 12 transmitting stations in provincial capital cities. The programming also was also diversified and coordinated into the general cultural, economic and political plan of the state. Unlike telegraph, wireless and radio, Television in Iran, developed primarily as a private enterprise during the late 1950s. It was inaugurated in October 1958 by the Sabot Pasal family (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). But later, for unexplained reasons and despite renewing the concession to the company in 1963 for another five years, the government usurped the private enterprise and planned a national television station. The National Iranian Television commenced its broadcasting in March 1967 and in 1971 was merged with the Iranian Radio and so National Iranian Radio and Television (NIRT) was founded.

The NIRT was rapidly extended into the autocratic state's biggest propaganda machine. During the last decade of the Pahlavi era, the NIRT served as the main channel of the regime's policies and of popular cultural 'Westoxification'. The expansion of state-owned-and-run broadcasting monopoly, as Green (1980: 37) suggests, was a "central developmental priority of the Shah. The reasons for this lay in a desire not to provide cheap popular entertainment, but rather to capitalise on radio and television as valuable tools for effecting social mobilisation." The centrality of NIRT is exemplified by the fact that by 1978 it had 7,000 employees projected to double by the 1980s. The NIRT's budget for 1975-76 rose about 20 percent while that of all other government agencies was cut. This budget "exceeded that of culture and arts as well as urban development, and was only 25 per cent less than the budget for social security and welfare." (Green, 1980:37). In the wake of these investments, "by 1975 NIRT was second only to Japan in Asia in terms of the development of its broadcasting capabilities" (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, 1994: 66-67).

During the 1960s and 1970s, an extreme bi-polarised structure was developed in Iranian society in terms of political, cultural and economic power and welfare. The mass media served the bi-polarising system as its hegemonising instrument. The media content were paradoxically based on a two-folded and, in nature, contradictory ideoculturally symbolic structures (Tehrani, 1980). The cultural campaigns and the media content, on the one hand, devotedly acknowledged 'nationalism' on the bases of the history of pre-Islamic Persian Empire. This mythic glorified history, as Fischer (1984:x) says, was the result of the Shah's "attempt to elevate the Zoroastrian heritage into a nationalist symbolism." This pre-Islamic symbolism was designed and expected to define a national identity which was supposed to become a legitimising source for the monarchy and Pahlavi dynasty. The mass media, on the other hand, celebrated 'modernisation and modernity'.

However, the nationalistic symbolism did function neither as a source for the necessary national self-identification nor as a legitimising ideology for the absolutist monarchical system. The symbolic structure of modernisation was also corrupted as it was equated with an abased image of modern Western popular culture. This impact was perceived by various scholars as Westernisation and Westoxification of Iranian culture. Besides the theoretical and psychological contradictions between these two ideocultural

symbolic structures, they did not seem to be capable of creating a firm base for the national identifications. This was due to an incompatibility between the two symbolic structures as well as due to their equal antagonism with the traditional identity of the masses. They did not respond to the social and cultural needs of the majority of the nation which was historically mainly created and maintained by its religious (Islamic) element. This situation resulted in deeper alienation of the already marginalised masses.

The content of the communications media, specifically that of the state-controlled radio and television, was filled up with the 'nationalist' and 'modernist' messages produced domestically or imported. Research shows that about 33 per cent of the content of the television's Channel One (general content) and 60 per cent of Channel Two (educational and cultural) was imported (Motamed-Nejad, 1977). Besides these two channels, the third television channel and one of radio were offering programmes only in English and other European languages which amounted to one-third of NIRT's programmes. The strong doses of imported programmes consisted of Western (particularly American) films, thrillers, soap operas, serials and musical shows or Western-style productions of other countries such as India, Turkey, and Egypt. This was "a reflection, many felt, of the Shah's preference for the West and disdain for things Persian." (Green, 1980: 37). Also, the domination of the imports could be attributed - besides the cultural preferences- to their lower costs and easier availability. In addition, "an initial lack of trained domestic personnel in both the creative and technical sides of broadcasting, and the constraints of royal dictatorship and censorship meant that imported programming was less controversial than home-made materials that might be seen as critical" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 67-68).

Moreover, the domestic productions were deeply effected by the genres, messages, and behavioural standards represented in Western programmes. For instance, domestic soap operas were trying to "inculcate viewers with the values of the 'new' Pahlavistic society around them. Dress in these shows was dominantly Western, men and women interacted with a familiarity and lack of restraint uncommon in Iran, and generally families portrayed were upper or upper-middle class, living in exclusive north Tehran" (Green, 1980: 37-38). Apparently, foreign productions did not reflect the public tastes. This was clear since the rare but well-made domestic programs representing Iranian culture and public identity were very popular. For example, a

domestic serial, *Morad Barqi* (Morad the electrician), “which was based on the wisdom of the folk characters quickly became a favourite. People responded eagerly to content they could identify with and that reflected Iranian culture and identity, but not much was provided along these lines” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 68).

The NIRT enjoyed some measures of independence from government and security forces.³⁰ But this autonomy did not prevent it from interventions by SAVAK or the court. The secret police occasionally had its sponsored programmes and the inviolability of the Shah was a main restraint in programming. For example, the beginning of daily programmes had to start with his portrait and also “the nightly newscast on the main television channel began with a brief filmstrip in which various images of the Shah, in military uniform, being crowned, were intercut” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994:70). Also news bulletins were essentially devoted to the activities of the royal family followed by a reasonable coverage of Western and Third World news (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mahlouji, 1978). While domestic news was limited to mostly ceremonial occasions, there was very little coverage of vital issues such as inflation -as there was no reference to real discussions or differing view-points related to national matters.

Cinema: The expansion of cinema in Iran shows similar trends. Cinema and films were not indisputably welcomed by the traditional public. From the outset, cinemas were mainly founded by members of religious minorities or government agents. For example, as Fischer (1984) notes in the late 1970s, one of two existing cinemas in the city of *Yazd* was established by a Zoroastrian-converted Baha’i in the 1930s. Also, the only cinema in the religious city of *Qom* was located far away from the city centre which contains the religious shrine and seminaries.

Similar to the broadcast content, majority of films shown in movie theatres were imported from Western countries. In 1960 the unprecedented public attendance for an Indian movie, *Sangam*, directed by *Raj Kapoor*, persuaded many of Indian producers and distributors to purchase their own movie theatres in Iran. Also in the early 1970s similar popularity was achieved by *Bruce Lee*’s Kung-fu movies (distributed in Iran by Warner Brothers). This resulted in a stream of martial arts fever among the youth. By

³⁰ For the reasons of this independence and also for the types of the programmes see Tehranian (1980: 15-16) and Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994: 69-70).

the late 1970s Iranian cinemas were dominated by imports from US, Britain, France, Italy, India, Egypt, Hong Kong and Turkey, although American thriller and action and Indian love and dance movies had higher shares. These imported products were shown in more theatres and had several times more box-office revenues than domestic films (see, e.g., *Film*, June 1987:1-2).

Regarding Iran's stagnant situation in the late 1970s, one can conclude that the 'formal culture' was a manufactured and fabricated product of the power elite which did not function within the extremely bi-polarised structure. Cultural production, distribution and consumption, better characterised under the label of ubiquitous cultural elitism and favouritism, was controlled by the autocratic state. The extraordinary celebrations and periodical or occasional ceremonies of the Shah's court (as *the* locale for the formal culture) showed the height of the power elite's cultural claims to holding the prosperous elements of both ancient Iranian and contemporary Western civilisations. But in due course the culture of the masses and also of the critical oppositional groups were neglected and humiliated. Therefore, the very prestigious formal festivities (for instance, the celebrations of the Shah's coronation in 1967, fiftieth anniversary of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1971, and the grandiose scaled 2,500th anniversary of Persian Empire in 1972) were widely criticised by the public and opposition groups inside Iran and elsewhere for many reasons. This widened the popular discontent and was transformed into an increasing revolutionary fever during the late 1970s.

Popular Islamic Revolution: 1978-79

Revolutionary dis-structure

By the late 1970s Iran had very rapidly and brutally undergone the processes of Westernisation, secularisation, and centralisation of authority. These processes were implemented and justified under the banners of modernisation and monarchical nationalism. These symbolic structures were based on and drawn out of two glorified 'moments' of human civilisations -those of ancient Persian Empire and of contemporary West. These ideologies were both imaginary and impractical since they did not reflect the traditional perceptions of the masses. This finally resulted in alienation of the masses. Iran, as Fischer (1980: x) argues, "despite the powerful currents and antagonisms [...]"

was symbolically stagnant: it was a world of myth not action.” Consequently, those processes emptied the society of much of its traditional socio-cultural ‘structure’ and ‘efficiency’ and dramatically failed to replace or create an indigenously and massively acceptable ‘modern’, ‘dynamic’, and ‘functional’ new order.

The dependent bourgeois development, rapid industrialisation, increasing urbanisation, and rising penetration of Western cultural ways of life, values and technologies under an ever-expanding autocratic control put the Iranian society on the edge of extreme polarisation. This phenomenon forced rapid and deep socio-psychological changes in the fabric of the society. Iranian society was divided into two ‘unequal’ poles: a vast majority of the powerless, suppressed and deprived masses (lower and traditional middle classes) and a very small but eminently culturally, economically and politically powerful and affluent elite (upper and modern middle classes). Geographical distribution of these classes was alarming. While the masses consisted of nomadic, rural and most of the urban population, the elite was concentrated in the north Tehran luxurious suburbs. Iran’s ‘pseudo-modernisation’, instead of creating ‘modernity’ and ‘development, according to Tehranian (1980), led to the emergence of a system of ‘two nations’ within the country; that is, a ‘dualist structure.’

Far beyond the important actual inequality, a sense of ‘inequity’ strongly heightened social reactions toward the existing ‘order’. This social awareness of inequity, deprivation and victimisation was the result of various feelings of “homelessness, depersonalisation, and humiliation in most sectors of the population”. These complex sentiments, while combined with “economic mismanagement, political suppression, social injustice, cultural alienation, and moral corruption,” caused the general collapse of the system (Tehranian, 1980: 9).

The Role of Cultural Discontent and Mass Media Content

Mass media and particularly the state broadcasting monopoly (NIRT) played an important role in the creation of this situation. The state devoted all available resources to the expansion of broadcasting long before the primordial literacy rate and press

circulation were expanded.³¹ By the late 1970s, radio and television covered respectively 100% and 70% of the population throughout the country. The media content, imported or produced, was devoted to the cultural tastes and cosmopolitan life-styles of the dependent bourgeois elite. Thus, the Western culture was imposed “upon a pre-modern population that inevitably experienced strong feelings of impropriety” (Tehrani, 1980: 16). The mass media in various ways functioned as an important factor in the creation of the ‘counter-modern,’ ‘dualist dis-structure.’

Culturally, Media and in particular television content brought ‘outrageous’ and ‘improper’ messages into the most sacred domain of Muslim Iranians -their families. Its portrayal of emotional and behavioural aspects of the ‘modern’ life-styles in private and public realms included many elements such as consumerism, alcohol, gambling, unveiled or even nude women, explicit sex and violence. These messages contradicted the traditional and moral beliefs of the majority of the people and so could not be tolerated by religious and moral family members. Furthermore, television advertisements seemed to succeed in disseminating Western aesthetics and consumerism. The media images also reflected “the growing foreignness of the physical and social environment, including architecture, clothing, food, social values and mores, and the growing social class divisions of consumption and attitudes” (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990: 344-45).

Economically, the exemplar of a modern life (and its material and cultural elements such as type of house, clothes, foods, ceremonies, occupations and so forth) was not affordable by most of the families living in traditional neighbourhoods or working in informal sectors of the economy. Politically, media was a partial substitution for real political communication and participation channels. The media were used as means of legitimisation and public persuasion “rather than as channels for agenda-setting, social feedback, social participation, and the social reconciliation of conflicting views and interests. Television, in particular, was used as a device to awe, attract, and mystify” and its power to demystify was thoroughly forgotten (Tehrani, 1980: 16). Also, as Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994: 71) discuss, television extensively carried the “economic and socio-cultural gaps of Iranian society -indeed, the international class differences- into everyone’s living room, so that instant comparisons

³¹ About the effects of this phenomenon see, for example, Motamed-Nejad (1977), Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994), and Tunstall (1977).

could be made between the viewer's own situation and the situation of the players in the television programs." Therefore, television played a crucial role in the creation of a distorted transitional 'mass public' in Iran during this period (See also Beeman, 1983; and Cottam, 1979).

After the formation of the Rastakhiz party in 1975 some kind of state-managed 'debateful' programmes were produced by the media. This resulted in emergence of open discussions, previously limited to small intellectual circles, on the popular communications channels. A series -though controlled and managed- of unprecedented news, discussion, and comedy programmes (e.g., *Mr. Marbuteh*, a nightly satire) were aired. These programmes brought up issues such as bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption; the problems resulting from high socio-economic expectations and subsequent frustration; and the results of high rural-urban migration such as shortages in housing, home appliances, and civil transportation. Thus, mass media, according to Sreberny-Mohammadi (1990: 348), somehow suddenly "became active mobilisers and agenda setters of political debates [which] far from legitimising an unpopular regime, in fact revealed, in a boomerang effect, the lack of regime substance beyond its mimetic Westernisation." This boomerang effect resulted in the erosion of the politically controlled atmosphere and, consequently, political debate was extended to new levels. Also, a wider set of participants (speakers and listeners) became involved in the political debates who gradually became more aware of the differing ideologies and world-views. Therefore, "despite increased regime surveillance of alternative forms of communication, further censorship of book publication, the arrest of writers, poets, and academics for criticising the regime, and the broadcasting of "confessions" of ideological error by renowned writers, the political atmosphere had been profoundly altered" (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990: 349).

Cultural Crises, Critique, and Challenges

By the late 1970s, it was widely believed that Iranian cultural identity was pushed to a state of crisis. Increasingly, a vast majority of intellectuals, literary figures, and religious authorities developed their critical assessments and voiced their anxieties. These groups, though relying on different premises and using varying terminology and

expression methods, seemed to point out 'similar' worries about the suffocation of the indigenous Iranian culture. They believed that the dynamic, functional indigenous culture was being substituted by a superficial, commercial, and pantomime-like 'counter-culture' borrowed from its Western origins. This concern was shared and expressed by "all strata of the intelligentsia, oppositional and regime-connected, religious and secular" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 98).

Also it was almost unanimously accepted that the deteriorating traditional culture was mostly religious and, therefore, undermining the religious identity of the nation had strongly weakened its cultural authenticity. For instance, *Jalal Al-e Ahmad*, a prominent intellectual, had talked of *Gharbzadegi*,³² Westoxification or Occidentitis, as the devastating cultural disease of Iranian society and had supported a return to traditional religious identity (Al-e Ahmad, 1982, original Persian publication in 1964 [1343]). *Ali Shariati*, an Islamic modernist, elaborated on this theme and tried to present a 'reformed' version of traditional Shi'ism in his numerous books and lectures. Adopting sociological methods and debates, he wished to purify Shi'ism on doctrinal and social institutional grounds. So, he introduced a seemingly anti-clerical socialist-Shi'ite ideology which attracted the educated youth from traditional backgrounds.

Several novelists and film directors helped to express these intellectual critiques in more popular and far reaching forms of arts. *Samad Behrangi's* short stories and *Parviz Kimiavi's* films, particularly *The Mongols* and *OK Mister*, had strong effects among the younger generation of the intelligentsia. Even secular-modernist intellectuals, some of whom had close relations with (and high positions in) the regime, had expressed concern about the national identity crisis. *Ehsan Naraghi*, a prominent affiliated scholar, at the Aspen Institute/Perspolis Symposium in 1975, pointed to the "deep-seated malaise of the West" and suggested employment of the traditional "mystical-poetic experiences" to preserve the cultural identity of the nation (Naraghi, 1976). With an almost similar approach, *Sayyed Hossein Nasr*, another scholar of high reputation and position, repeatedly acknowledged the crisis. He suggested that Iranians and all modern men of East and West alike return to an intellectually reconstructed indoctrination and world-view of Sufism (Islamic-Iranian gnosticism or mysticism). For Nasr and many

³² This Persian term has been translated into Westoxi(fi)cation, West(ern)struckness, Westitis, Occidentosis and many others in various English books.

other intellectuals from the religious upper and middle classes who had Western-style education, the metaphysics, esoteric psychology, eschatological philosophy and aesthetics of Sufism seemed to be the panacea of all social, cultural, and political disorders of the individual and society. Unlike some other intellectuals advocating a Sufi symbolic structure for lower classes³³, Nasr's usage of Sufism (1972, 1975) was an intellectual elitist campaign which would differ from the religious ("Shi'ite") ideology of the lower classes, eliminate resistance of the traditional classes against some aspects of modernisation and accelerate political consolidation of the Pahlavi regime.

Revolutionary Mobilisation of Tradition

Iran by the late 1970s, as Tehranian (1980) discusses, had developed an overall political, social, and economic dualist structure which consisted of two nations within the country: the formal, secular, elitist and modern versus the informal, religious, populist and traditional. Each of these 'two nations' had an independent communication system. The mass media and its content (ideology, myths, legacies, and beliefs) differed dramatically between the two co-existing nations. The state owned and controlled the press, radio and television while a religious popular network "used informal channels and small, as opposed to big, media" (Tehranian 1980: 17). The traditional religious network had two main structured channels: the *mosque* and the *bazaar*. The religious structure consisted of tens of thousands of religious figures (in different ranks and functions) and thousands of religious establishments such as *mosques*, *Hosseiniyehs* (religious lecture halls), and *madrasas* (seminaries) in rural and urban environments. The bazaar, on the other hand, consisted of numerous traditional shopping complexes, hundreds of organised *asnaf* (guilds) and hundreds of thousands of *bazaaris*. The *bazaaris* consisted of merchants, shopkeepers, traders and workshop owners and controlled foreign trade as well as wholesale and retailing inside the country. The two wings of the network had mutual interrelations which had been developed during centuries. The historical alliance had resulted in the generation of common economic,

³³ For instance, consider the Culture and Personality Circle and its publications in Fischer (1980: 140-142).

cultural, and political views and interests -and that frequently had appeared as a mobilising force during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras.³⁴

By the late 1970s, concentrating on the immorality and wickedness of consumerism, alcohol, nudity, music, dancing, free sexual and gender relations, and unveiling of women, the clergy had powerfully resisted anti-religious cultural trends in the society. Thus, some religious authorities had declared as sinful or at least suspicious the use and ownership of any media with anti-religious content. Accordingly, some of the traditional people considered cinema attendance, and ownership of radio, television, and audio cassettes and players as against their religious morale. Furthermore, a few high ranking and politically active religious leaders had long spoken out against the political and cultural penetration of Western imperialism in the Muslim world and in Iran. They had argued that the dissolution and destruction of the religious core of the traditional culture was part of the general plans of imperialism for overall domination (see, e.g., Keddie, 1980 & 1983).

In particular, Ayatollah Khomeini publicly criticised the dissolution of the Iranian religious identity. While in exile after the 1963 movement, he was the most politically active clergy in the 1970s and was considered as the leader of the religious opposition. From as early as the 1940s, he had phrased his grievous concerns about the moral and political effects of the modernising cultural policies of the state which would help the cultural penetration of the West in Iran and the destruction of its moral and political values. Attacking Reza Shah's attempt to modernise the dress code, unveil women and change school curriculum during the 1930s, he defended the traditional and moral religious culture on the bases of the teachings of the divine *Shari'a*, the Sacred Law of the Islamic faith. He charged that these policies would massacre Islamic moral values of self-control, obedience to God, chastity, and altruism and will replace them by exploded malicious, corruptive, uncontrolled, sinful, and animalistic desires. Thus, he warned of the moral deterioration of the nation and predicted an ubiquitous presence of immorality. In addition, he argued that global imperialism deliberately struggles to ruin the moral bases of the Iranian culture in order to destroy the strongest defence of the

³⁴ For more information on the characteristics of the bazaar and mosque and the role of their alliance in the course of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 see for example: Abrahamian (1982), Akhavi (1980), Ashraf (1983), Keddie (1980, and 1983), Fischer (1980, 1982, 1983, and Abedi, 1990), Sreberny-Mohammadi (1985, and 1990), and Tehranian (1980, and 1981).

country against further expansion of political and economic interests of the West (Khomeini, 1981, original Persian publication in 1941 [1320]).

After the repressed movement of 1963, the clergy who shared the political views of Ayatollah Khomeini had developed their political and cultural critique about the status quo. They also had adopted new communication channels along the traditional networks of mosques and religious schools to publicise their views and challenge other extending ideologies in the society. The clergy had developed its publications to introduce the pillars of the Islamic (Shi'ite) faith to the younger generations of the modernising and mobilised population. Besides these educational activities and the direct and open political militancy, as Bakhash (1984: 43) suggests, the third group of clergy was active in organisation of “a proliferation of Islamic associations, most of them devoted to teaching and cultural activities, some using such activities as a cover for organising opposition to the regime.” Therefore, by the late 1970s, on the eve of the revolution, the clergy had developed the nucleus of an organisation which composed of “a more elaborate network of mosques, Islamic associations, and clerics sympathetic to [Ayatollah] Khomeini, a large number of young men who had learned at Islamic discussion groups to regard Islam as a dynamic force for change and opposition” (Bakhash, 1984: 44).

A Short Retrospective Overview of the Revolution

It was in this situation that the complex interplay of various factors fostered the seeds of a massive mobilisation which initially started among the religious and secular intelligentsia. These factors, according to Bashiriyeh (1984: 1), included “development of a revolutionary ideology portraying a better possible society in a decade or so before the revolution; the economic crisis of 1973-78 leading to the generation of economic discontent and grievances on a massive scale; the emergence of some fundamental conflicts interest between the state and the upper bourgeoisie; the disintegration of the regime’s foreign support; the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses by a network of mobilising organisations; and the occurrence of a political alliance between diverse forces of opposition to the monarchy.”

The Revolution evolved through several stages. The unchallenged religious and secular intelligentsia publicised its 'ideologies' and gained public following. For this they used "small media" -i.e., a string of "open letters", leaflets, pamphlets, audio cassettes and alike- and a network of ubiquitous traditional communication organisations (for details see Mowlana, 1979; Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994; Tehranian, 1979). Demonstrations and strikes became more massive, bloodshed more frequent, repression more violent and, gradually, in a little more than a year (late 77-11, February 79) the old regime step by step was stripped of the reins of power.

The Revolution, uniting all socio-economic classes, was a popular and populist one. It had strong participation from all traditional groups of bazaaris, religious authorities, modern middle and lower classes of professionals, intellectuals, salaried workers and dislocated migrants. Although it mainly started in the cities, the revolution enjoyed widespread support of many rural and nomadic populations. It was a widespread upheaval in 'negativism' (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994) or in other words, a 'self-fulfilling' revolution (as opposed to 'plan-fulfilling' type) since it lacked a clearly thought out prior plan for the New Order -that is, a plan for socio-political reconstruction of society after the destruction of the Old Regime (Bashiriyeh, 1984).

It is strongly postulated that the revolutionary motif was a complex of endured structural dysfunction in political, economic, social, and cultural sub-systems. But, despite an ongoing controversy, one may argue that many researchers of the Revolution have utilised a cultural approach. According to this approach, the issue of cultural identity was somehow central to the Revolution.³⁵ This approach regards culture broadly as entailing political culture, ideology and system; collective national identities; historical collective memory and consciousness; and religious morale and teachings. According to this approach, however, the revolution was an overwhelming upheaval against injustice, inequality, and immorality. In other words, it was a massive search for a new 'social moral and spiritual order' based on justice, equality and morality. This order, when established, would provide the guidelines for the re-construction of social

³⁵ For example of such approaches see Arjomand (1988a, 1988b), Behnam (1986), Esposito (1983), Farsoun & Mashayekhi (1992), Fischer (1980), Fischer & Abedi (1990), Mottahedeh (1985), Najmabadi (1987), and Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994).

structures and institutions and management of everyday life in accordance with the pure and authentic perceptions of the self and society.

Najmabadi (1987) suggests that the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was a return to a 'moral order'. She believes that Iranian political thought since mid-19th century was preoccupied "*with the material transformation of a backward society*". The backwardness of the society was perceived as relative as compared with the western societies. Therefore, modernisation and Westernisation, (i.e., imitation of all socio-political and cultural transformations that occurred in the West), in one form or another, was seen as the solution. But by the 1970s, "political concern had shifted from backwardness to decadence, from modernisation to *the moral purification of a corrupt society*. from the political operations of government, to the utilisation of oil revenues and the changing values of society, everything was seen to have been corrupted. The West [...] was now criticised as the principal insidious force behind this state of degeneracy" (203). The Revolution embodies a radical re-definition of society's preoccupations which, being corruption and decadence, encompasses the mere problem of underdevelopment and backwardness. Najmabadi, borrowing Thomas Kuhn's term, calls the increasing appeal to Islamic politics, which "is centred on morality, not modernity [...] a shift to a totally new 'paradigm'" (204).

Summary

The introduction of modernisation in Iran followed the penetration of Western powers and their rivalries in Iran during the 19th century. This process of modernisation was not approved, invoked or planned by the nationalist forces and, therefore, did not serve the national cultural and political interests. This was particularly true in the case of transportation and interpersonal and mass communications technologies (print media, telegraph, telephone, cinema, radio and television). The broadcasting media under the Pahlavis, widened the material, spiritual and cultural gaps between the ruling elites and its 'modern' upper class advocates with the 'traditional' middle and lower classes. Mass media, along more direct military and police apparatuses, served as the main channels for politico-cultural hegemonic consolidation under the central authoritarian state. The

hegemony was justified under the dual banners of modernisation, and patriotism based on the pre-Islamic Persian Empire.

Briefly speaking, modernisation destroyed Iran's political and cultural independent 'old (i.e., traditional) order' which was based on a 'pre-modern' morality and a sense of justice and replaced it with a 'modern (dis)order'. Accordingly, dignity, self-respect, and identity of the individual was injured by the subsequent alienation and 'Westoxification.' Mass media and particularly the state broadcasting monopoly (NIRT) played an exceptional role in the creation of this situation. Media content was devoted to the cultural tastes and cosmopolitan life-styles of the dependent bourgeois elite and was dominated by imports from West (mainly America) or Western-style domestic productions. Iran's pseudo-modernisation process, instead of unifying 'modernity' and 'development, led to the emergence of a 'dualist structure'.

Therefore, in Iran two opposite blocs of change and resistance, of globalisation and authenticity, of modernity and tradition challenged each other to control the mass media. By late the 1970s the clergy, concentrating on the immorality, wickedness and irreligiosity of consumerism, alcohol, nudity, music and alike, had resisted the anti-religious trends. Consequently, one of the most crucial (cl)aims of the Revolution of 1979 was to re-capture and control the cultural domain and mass communications media, to restore traditional value systems, and to re-introduce the pure, authentic, and popular Shi'a culture.

It was in this situation that a complex interplay of various factors fostered the seeds of a massive mobilisation. The Revolution, uniting all socio-economic classes, was a popular and populist one. It strongly encompassed all the traditional classes. It was a widespread upheaval in 'negativism' and it lacked a clearly thought out prior plan for the socio-political reconstruction of the society after the destruction of the Old Regime. The new order gradually came to be an Islamic Republic.

Chapter IV

VCRs in the First Republic: 1979-89

‘The Devil Banished’

This chapter starts with a historical narrative of the aftermath of the Revolution of 1979 which resulted in the creation of the Islamic Republic. The general history of the post-Revolutionary Iran has been divided into two phases: The *First Republic* covers almost a decade (with two distinguishable periods from February 1979 until mid-1982, and from mid-1982 until 1989). The *Second Republic* spans from late 1989 until the present.³⁶ Then, politico-economic and socio-cultural trends of the Iranian state and society will be analysed. In this context it is assumed that the ideological and socio-politico-economic issues created an environment in which cultural and mass media policies of the Islamic Republic were determined. This environment also affected the definition and function of video cassette recorders within the Iranian society. Thus, the development and implications of VCRs could be explained and understood more effectively if analysed within the larger frame of cultural mass media policies, which itself reflects the impact of prevailing societal as well as ideological factors. Therefore, a brief discussion on cultural and mass media policies of the First Republic can shed some light on the context in which video cassette recorders were utilised, perceived, and evaluated and, accordingly, the VCR-related policies were adapted. (The Second Republic, will be discussed in the following Chapter.)

³⁶ The terms First Republic and Second Republic were first applied on Iranian history by Ehteshami (1995) to differentiate between the history of the Islamic Republic before and after 1988-89 changes. These terms were accepted immediately and since then have been widely used by others, see, e.g., Hashim (1995).

Islamic Republic of Iran³⁷

With the triumph of the Revolution in February 1979 began the process of realisation of the revolutionary promises and reconstruction of the political, economic, cultural, and social structures on the bases of its (cl)aims. But this proved to be astonishingly problematic due to a myriad of internal and external disputes and challenges. The Revolution revived previously abolished movements and also nourished a welter of new political parties and tendencies which increasingly pursued their uncompromising ideologies. The clash of these ideological claims gradually became bitter since the opposing parties sought to influence the process of political reconstitution according to their own socio-economic and ideo-cultural interests.

The political spectrum included liberal-bourgeois parties of the middle class which advocated secular democracy, non-liberal fundamentalist parties of the clergy with a tendency toward an Islamic state, radical Islamic parties of the intelligentsia, and leftist parties of the radical intelligentsia (Bashiriyeh, 1984). After the Revolution, the power bloc was occupied by the first two groups. The liberal-secular groups under the premiership of M. Bazargan came to form the Provisional Revolutionary Government and inherited the state apparatuses. The fundamentalist clergy established and controlled the Revolutionary Council and many parallel and popular revolutionary organisations which were established by the masses -namely; revolutionary councils and courts, and the Islamic Committees and Guards³⁸. However, the alliance between the two “ultimately broke over their differing views of the nature of political authority in the new state. The clerical parties were anti-Western and extremely anti-imperialist and drew their intellectual strength from the traditional literati. The liberal parties were secularist and drew inspiration from diverse Western intellectual traditions” (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 133).

The Provisional Government adopted a ‘step-by-step’ policy in economic, political, and cultural issues. From the outset, the clerics as well as other Islamic and leftist extremists opposed these policies as un-radical and so demanded more radical

³⁷ This narrative relies extensively on two of the best analyses of the Revolution of 1979 and the early history of the Islamic Republic, namely, Bakhash (1984) and Bashiriyeh (1984).

³⁸ The nation-wide revolutionary organisations also included the Crusade for Reconstruction, the Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini, the Mobilisation Organisation (*Basij*), and the Housing, *Mostazafin*, and Martyrs’ Foundations. Also more culturally-oriented organisations include Special Movement for Developing Education of the Deprived People, University Crusade, Cultural Revolution Committee, The Office for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Sin. On these see, e.g., Hiro (1988: 197-201).

measures -especially in matters related to redistribution of economic and welfare facilities, nationalisation of banks and large industries, and foreign policy. During the first months after the victory of the Revolution in February 1979, various popular institutions emerged with extensive grass-root support and demanded more radical shifts in the state policies. This also included numerous ethnic and class conflicts which ultimately left “larger sectors of the rural, urban and tribal masses [...] disenchanted with the performance of the revolution” (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 149). These socio-economic demands combined with expectations for a more Islamic cultural sphere and laws helped the fundamentalist clergy present in the power bloc to consolidate their power. Having secured that the new regime should be an ‘Islamic Republic’ by a general election in March 1979, the clerical elite put forward the principle of *Velayat-e Faghih* (rule of juristconsult³⁹). This principle was based on the theories of Imam Khomeini and was translated into the Constitution that passed by a referendum in December 1979.

At the same time the clergy orchestrated a mass mobilisation by attacking US imperialism and their internal liberal allies. Finally, the seizure of the US Embassy on 4 November 1979 marked a decisive stage in the struggle between the moderates and the extremist clergy. The files of the American Embassy were used to show the imperialistic intentions of the US to control the Revolution, and also to confirm the ‘contacts’ of the Embassy officials with some of the liberal leaders and particularly the Provisional Government. With the expulsion of the liberals from the power structure, the clergy adopted more populist, radical, and Islamic policies which mobilised the masses, the left and the radical Islamic groups.

However, the process of consolidation of power was interrupted by the election of A. *Bani-Sadr* as the first president in January 1980. He was politically liberal and critical of ‘monopoly of power’, although more radical in economic and social policies than the Bazargan administration. He put forward his ideas of a “Godly classless society” and “Islamic economics” (Bashiriyeh, 1984). Bani-Sadr’s term in office (from his election in January 1980 until June 1981) widened the differences between the liberal and the extremist clergy and also between the latter and the leftist and radical Islamic groups. Finally, his fall and “a rapid chain of events which followed amidst mounting terror and

³⁹ This has also been translated as rule of Shi’ite Jurisprudent, vice-regency of Islamic jurist, rule of the Faqih, and alike.

conflict between the extremists and their opponents” led to the assassination of many high-ranking clerical and non-clerical members of the Fundamentalist clerical groups in the Islamic Republican Party, government and the Majlis in bomb-explosions (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 161). This mini-civil war situation started in January and was escalated in June 1981 and continued until mid-1982. This period also witnessed several military *coup* attempts.

During this period, the election of Hojjatoleslam Ali Khamene’i as president in October 1981 increased the clerical control in executive power. With the consolidation of actual power in their hands by mid-1982, the clergy “succeeded in fusing religious and political authority in the principle of *Velayat-e Faghih*” which was based on the Shi’a interpretation of legitimacy of political authority (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 167). According to this interpretation in the absence of the Twelfth Shi’ite Imam, the Ulama are the general authority in religious as well as political matters. Therefore, “the Faghih is accorded extensive power by the Constitution, similar to the powers that a ruling Shi’ite Imam would have”(Ibid.). As a result of these ideological and political advancements, and also because of the achievements in Iran-Iraq war fronts, the clergy asserted their hegemony and mounted a new campaign for overall Islamicisation by undertaking popular policies and mass mobilisation (Bakhash, 1984).

The newly widened Islamicisation campaign encompassed all social spheres and included new measures in political, cultural, economic, bureaucratic, and military organisations. Also, the Islamicisation of politics, the continuation of internal unrest and the war condition pushed the regime to rely heavily on ideological propaganda and doctrinal education of the public in order to mobilise mass opinion and so discredit contesting views (Bakhash, 1984). From then on, the clergy filled the power bloc and continued “to assert their hegemony by undertaking mass mobilisation and attempting to solve the ‘social question’”, that is the demands of the lower social classes for economic reforms (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 166).

Iran between 1982 and 1989 witnessed extensive changes in political, economic, cultural and judicial policies which followed two main strategic policies of ‘Islamicization’ and anti-Westernisation. These policies relied on a mass mobilisation programme, which was accomplished by populist economic and cultural campaigns. Also

of importance were the intense economic and psychological effects of the trade boycott of Iran in May 1980 by the US and Western European countries and the outbreak of a full scale war with Iraq in September 1980. A retrospective analysis reveals that the policies of the Islamic state from mid-1981 until the end of the decade were determined by a set of far reaching underlying factors. During this period, the ideological as well as objective features did not witness considerable transformation and, therefore, prevented any major changes in the state policies. However, during the 1980s the combination of ideological uniformity with the persistence of objective features created a less radically dynamic structure in the country with rather hegemonic policies and tendencies. The most important of these elements could be listed as the empowerment of politically active *Shi'ism as a theological ideology* which was used to combine religious and political authority; the continuation of the *revolutionary condition* (in terms of relative political instability, challenges on legitimacy, internal rivalries, and foreign pressures); the escalation of the inherited crisis of *economic underdevelopment*; and the outbreak of a full scale *war* with Iraq. In the rest of this chapter the role of these underlying factors is discussed in the adoption of cultural/media and particularly VCR-related policies.

Policies of the First Republic

It was suggested earlier that the consolidation of power by the fundamentalist clergy started with the victory of the Islamic Revolution and their control of revolutionary organisations. This was accomplished by expansion of their control over the state machinery by the mid-1980s, at the expense of the liberal and other rival groups. The regime enjoyed massive popular support and gradually tried to establish a Shi'ite theocratic state with populist, non-dependent, Islamic policies in all societal spheres and sub-structures.

The Islamic Republic, according to the Preamble of the Constitution, set for itself the final aim of creating a just Islamic country. This challenge nourished the belief that in Islam government “does not spring from the sphere of classes or domination by individuals or groups. [But from] a nation united in faith and thinking which provides itself with an organisation so that in the process of transformation of ideas and beliefs, its way may be opened towards the ultimate goal (moving towards God)” (the Preamble of

the Constitution, 1979). Therefore, as during the course of the Revolution, the 'community of believers' (*Ummah*) should be cleansed from "the dust and rust of idolatry, and from foreign ideological influence". The victorious Islamic Revolution of this 'model society' was a movement for "the victory of all the oppressed over the arrogant [and shall] continue both inside and outside the country [...] for the rescue of the deprived and oppressed nations throughout the world" (Ibid.). Article 3 of the Constitution set for the government the duty of directing all its resources to the goals including:

“1. the creation of a favourable environment for the growth of moral virtues based on faith and piety and the struggle against all forms of vice and corruption;

2. raising the level of public awareness in all areas, through the proper use of the press, mass media, and other means; [...]

5. the complete elimination of imperialism and the prevention of foreign influence;

13. the attainment of self-sufficiency in scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural, and military domains, and other similar spheres;

14. securing the multifarious rights of all citizens, both women and men, and providing legal protection for all, as well as the equality of all before the law;

15. the expansion and strengthening of Islamic brotherhood and public cooperation among all the people” (the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979).

These were translated into various policies:

Politically, the new regime adopted policies on the bases of Islamic notions of nation, state, inter-state relations, and power structure (Hunter, 1992). These notions, along with the practical criteria resulting from the revolutionary requirements finally created a theocratic, hegemonising state which took the task of creating an ideal Islamic 'nation' and 'state'. In doing so, it used direct punitive and preventive measures to repress the expressions of contesting political ideologies of the left and right and their cultural manifestations (Bakhash, 1984; Bashiriyeh, 1984). Iran in its foreign policy adopted a 'neither East/nor West' or non-alignment strategy and also reflected its quest

for an ideal Islamic political order by exporting revolutionary ideology to other Muslim countries (Hunter, 1990).

Economically, the revolutionary regime rejected the capitalist and socialist economic developmental models and searched for a Third Way based on 'authentic Islamic' teachings. Though it lacked a body of doctrine for regulating the economy, the persistent pressures from the lower classes and the escalation of inflation rate and shortage of consumer goods necessitated intensive state intervention in the foreign trade and the production and distribution of consumer goods. The subsequent policies included nationalisation of industry and trade, the economic mobilisation programme, the anti-profiteering campaign, price fixing and land redistribution (Bashiriyeh, 1984). These policies were drawn from and justified on the bases of a philosophy of egalitarianism, populism, and self-sufficient and independent development. This philosophy was effected by leftist ideas, though widely expressed in Islamic terms (Hunter, 1992). As a result of these policies, the state became the principal economic actor in all economic sectors including foreign trade. This economic philosophy, combined with other political factors, led to a remarkable reduction in Iran's ties with the West and expansion of its trade with Third World countries, finally resulting in establishment of a 'South-South cooperation policy' and resistance against multinational corporations (see also Ehteshami, 1992, 1995).

Culturally, following the adoption of Islam as the sole point of reference in all aspects of life, the Islamic Republic introduced and increasingly extended the 'puritanical' policies of Islamicisation -return to the *true* and *authentic religious culture*. This was accomplished by attempts for a reversal of the Westernisation, secularisation, and (pre-Islamic) Iranianisation policies of the Pahlavi regime. In due course, politicisation of culture meant that cultural processes (production, distribution, and consumption of particularly media content) were to be cleansed and purified from all residues of secularism, liberalism, nationalism and alike which were defined closely with the (Western, more precisely American) Imperialism and, therefore, supposedly by nature, contradicted the true Islamic culture and life-styles.

However, as many scholars have suggested, the state policies of the post-Revolutionary era were often adopted and executed amidst confusion, indecisiveness, and

chaotic factionalism. For instance, Ehteshami (1995: xiii) notes that they “were often somewhat eclectic and uncoordinated, reflecting both the chaotic residue of revolutionary process itself, and the underpreparedness of the theological establishment to actually wield the reins of power, in both practical and ideological terms”. Also, the state gradually, faced by difficulties and resistance from domestic and external sources, adopted a less idealistic stand in its policies and tried to mix its ideological aspirations with rationalisation and pragmatism (Hunter, 1990).

Cultural and Mass media policies of the First Republic

There exists a dramatic shortage of material on the cultural/mass media policies of the Islamic Republic. Yet, most of the existing material seem mainly to be involved in politics of/and culture than explaining precise ‘cultural policies.’ Here, it seems possible to conclude that the Islamic Republic sought to realise the religio-ideological aims of the revolution. The ‘cultural programme’ of the Islamic Republic, especially the divine task of Shi’ite clergy within its body, was adopted on the bases of the religious, socio-political philosophy of Imam Khomeini. This was translated into the principle of *Velayat-e Faghih* which is responsible for the propagation and institutionalisation of the authentic and nationalistic Islam (*Islamicisation*) and confrontation of what is perceived as ‘un-Islamic’ (including the Westernisation of culture and polity). Imam Khomeini’s views on Man and World can help us to understand the cultural inclinations and struggles of the post-revolutionary state.

According to Imam Khomeini, as Rajaei (1983) clearly points out, it is man that is the sole centre and actor in the world and human history and the source of both the problems and solutions in his mundane and spiritual life. Consequently, it is the understanding of man of himself that enables him to solve all human problems. Imam Khomeini believes that “man is the microcosm of the universe by his mere bodily existence and at the same time he is the microcosm of God by his spirit. Man is therefore the key to understanding God, and reforming him is the solution to all the ills of the world” (Rajaei, 1983: 35). The understanding and training of man, therefore, has been the final aim of all prophets, philosophers, and mystics. On the other hand, on the basis of his knowledge in Islamic sciences, philosophy and gnosticism, Imam Khomeini gives

credence to “man’s ability to traverse the path of perfection” (Ibid.: 36). he also believes that the divine law of Islam (*sharia*) provides the sole existing ‘perfect guideline’ for the education and reorientation of otherwise misguided man towards his salvation.

Furthermore, Rajaei notes that Imam Khomeini’s world-view “is replete with antinomies or dichotomies:” man vs. God; the undeveloped man vs. perfect man; the straight path vs. satanic path; divine politics vs. Satanic politics; manmade laws vs. divine laws; and the oppressed (*Mostazafin*) vs. the oppressors (*mostakbarin*) (Ibid.; 37). These dichotomies appear to be based on Islam which is comprehensive in nature and claims to possess the truth. According to Rajaei’s discussion we can summarise Imam Khomeini’s views as follows: The undeveloped, animalistic man under divine politics, guided by the perfect men of divine laws, chooses the divine path and by rejecting the Satanic politics and manmade laws of the oppressors opposes oppression, and finally becomes a perfect man and unites with God Himself. Furthermore, this passage is possible because of the great potentials of man and the existence of the divine guidelines of Islam. According to Imam Khomeini, the Islamic Sharia’ provides the ‘higher laws’ of civil life, while satisfying a harmonious frame for the administration of affairs of the community. The Islamic guardianship, unlike ‘human’ governments, has the rectification (*tahzib*) of people’s souls as its aim (Rajaei, 1983) and hence, inevitably “is concerned with an individual’s personal affairs as well as those of his family. It has ordinances for one’s relations with neighbours, fellow citizens, fellow religionists, and non-believers” (Imam Khomeini as quoted in Ibid.: 59).

In cultural and media spheres, the world-view of Imam Khomeini was translated into two interrelated ‘principles’: *Islamicisation* and *anti-Westernisation*. The Islamic Republic has sought to Islamicise culture and all domains of social behaviour in public as well as in private spaces. According to the Islamicisation principle, the revolutionary Shi’ite ideology was adapted as the sole point of reference in cultural orientations of the state. This policy had far-reaching implications in terms of the media policies, including organisational management and regulation, and production and selection of the content. The media were put under the supervision of Islamic figures. In due course it was necessary -as it was expressed in the slogan of ‘*Neither East/Nor West*’- to confront the contesting Western ‘paradigms’. Based on these principles, the content of mass media

was to be monitored and censored under the Islamic criteria, in order to prevent further diffusion of anti-religious messages by the royalist, West or pro-Westerners.⁴⁰

Islamicization of culture, and inevitably the mass media, was accomplished through confrontation with all 'un-Islamic' politico-cultural ideologies and expressions. During the course of the Revolution in 1977-78, the broad category of the un-Islamic was claimed to include the *Taghuti* culture of the Pahlavi regime and the prevailing media. For instance, Islamic veiling and attending prayer meetings were two symbols of politico-cultural resistance against the monarchy (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). Also, cinemas, discos and night-clubs, alcohol stores, and luxury hotels were, like banks and the Ministries of Culture and Information, among the 'cultural establishments' of the regime frequently attacked and burned by the demonstrators (see, e.g., Hiro, 1985).

Not surprisingly, "the first duty of the Revolution was to destroy everything connected with the Shah's regime" (Heikal, 1981: 180). This exceeded far beyond the replacement of power elites and -possibly more importantly, supported by popular anguish- was directed toward the culture which had preserved the Pahlavi dynasty despite its repressive polity. Therefore, the revolutionaries sought to destroy both legitimising symbolic sets of the Pahlavis. They thus attacked the Shah's modernisation as a guise for the Westernisation of the country and his pre-Islamic Iranianisation as an attempt to empty Iranian culture of its Islamic treasures. It was firmly believed that deviation of the masses and the elites from Islamic ethos and morality was the sole source of social, political, and economic evils and mischiefs in the society. If a nation adheres to Islamic cultural values and behaviours no social evil or injustice can occur or settle in the society (see, e.g., Bakhash, 1984; Bashiriyeh, 1984; Hiro, 1985, 1988; Rajaei, 1983). According to this view, immediately after February 1979, alcohol, gambling, music and dancing, prostitution and pornographic films were banned (Hiro, 1985). Also the relevant businesses and public (or private) spaces were closed and whoever had been involved with these 'earth-corrupting' evils were legally pursued, prosecuted, inactivated or exiled (Naficy, 1987). The regime even "tried to eradicate any vestiges of Iran's pre-Islamic

⁴⁰ The main interest of this section is in media policies. However, on the Islamicisation and anti-Westernisation of other areas of cultural production of graphics, imagery and iconography (such as stamps, caricatures and cartoons, currency and coinage, posters, and etc.) see; Chelkowski (1987, and 1989) and Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1988).

culture. [This] anti-nationalist crusade was a clear retaliation for what they perceived to have been the Pahlavi's anti-Islamic campaign" (Hunter, 1992: 16). This cultural campaign also included a challenge to instil a revolutionary spirit into the cultural and artistic life of the nation.

It was noted earlier that the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty eliminated all state control mechanisms and created a free and dynamic atmosphere of 'open debate' in Iran. This freedom was obvious in political and cultural communications since the mushroomed Islamic as well as leftist and other secular political parties and social groups exploited the freedom to publish their newspapers, journals, books, cassette tapes, pamphlets and the like to propagate their ideals. However, after a brief period during 1979, various factions of the revolutionary power elite considered the situation chaotic and that it undermined government authority and the state reinstitution process. The provisional Government as the Revolutionary Council as early as the dawn of the Revolution moved to secure the control of communications media.

In particular the clergy considered the situation inappropriate for an Islamic country. Advocating a puritan Islamic ideology, the clergy gradually implemented Islamicisation policies in cultural and media spheres. During the pre-revolutionary era, the mass media and particularly the state broadcasting monopoly (NIRT) had played a crucial role in the diffusion of 'modern' cultural tastes and cosmopolitan life-styles of the monarchic power elite and their associates among the nation. From the pre-revolutionary era, Shi'ite religious authorities, like the secular intellectuals, had appreciated the importance of the mass media and its role in cultural and political orientation of the society⁴¹ (see the critics of NIRT in Chapter 3). But, the clergy had considered the content of radio, television, cinema movies, and the press a source of politico-cultural immorality, wickedness, irreligiosity, inferiority, and dependence. Thus, it was evident that one of the aims of the Islamic Revolutionary state would be 'cleansing' and 'purifying' the communications media and its content.

From the early post-revolutionary period, the control of mass -especially broadcasting- media was among the most agitating issues of the revolutionary political parties. Nevertheless, the challenging groups mainly charged that the political news and

⁴¹ For instance, Imam Khomeini after 1963 movements had requested a few hours of radio time for the clergy as an aim of his political campaign (on this see Bakhsh, 1984).

coverage was monotonous but did not, for instance, criticise the cultural policies of the media content. However, the clergy had secured control of the judicial and legislative powers, though the executive partially remained in the hands of 'liberals' such as the Provisional Prime Minister Bazargan and President Bani-sadr. During this period, the Revolutionary Council acted as the final body of decision-making in all important issues including cultural and media policies. Therefore, from February 1979, the national broadcasting and press were put under the control of Imam Khomeini's appointees or other clerical figures. The private print media (books and journals) and the film industry were regulated by the government and, therefore, their Islamicisation was largely oriented from other sectors of the regime, in accordance with the demands of the public and the religious pressure groups.

Within a few months after February 1979, the Ministry of Information was renamed Ministry of National Guidance, and "the inevitable press law passed in August gave the Islamic judicial backing to press control" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 168). The clerical demands for the Islamicisation of the media was gradually severed as political disputes became bitter and were transformed into military confrontations. The clerical control of all communications media was tightened by mid-1981 when a state of war with Iraq was combined with the civil war and assassinations. Finally, the process of hegemonisation of the media was accomplished by mid-1982 with relative ease in both war fronts, and the expulsion of 'liberals' and of militia groups who occasionally would challenge the prevailing policies for alternative political or cultural content⁴².

During this period NIRT was renamed *Voice & Vision of the Islamic Republic* (VVIR) and along with other media was used as "powerful instrument of political and cultural socialisation, education, and mobilisation, [further] extending the traditional forms of communication" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991: 38). The VVIR witnessed a purging of royalist elements and their replacement by religious and clerical managers and personnel. These, along with other issues, limited the production capabilities of the organisation resulting in a substantial reduction in the broadcasting

⁴² For the history of this period and politics of media see, among others, Bakhash (1984), Bashiriyyeh (1984), Halliday (1983), Heikal (1981), Hiro (1985), and Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991, and 1994).

time, from around twenty to five hours a day. Furthermore, the number of television channels were reduced from three to only one (Ibid.: 39).

However the year of 1358 (21 March 1979-21 March 1980) was a transitional one as far as the cinema and broadcasting content is concerned. Cinemas were dominated by foreign films, although “efforts to lower the level of imports had begun. First the importation of B grade Turkish, Indian, and Japanese films was curtailed followed closely by a ban on all ‘imperialistic’ and ‘anti-revolutionary’ films” (Naficy, 1987: 450). After the new year of 1359 (traditional *now’ruz* on March 21, 1980) cultural struggles were intensified by the clergy due to a range of reasons. For instance, Hojjatoleslam Khamene’i, the Imam of Tehran’s Friday prayers, showed his dissatisfaction with the radio-television programmes and denounced their content during the new year holidays as the continuation of *Taghuti* culture in society. As a result, a new phase of ‘Cultural Revolution’ started. Cinema and television programmes were cleared of the ‘unsuitable’ material and also streets were cleansed of illegal musical audio-cassettes. During this period not only were measures taken to eliminate the royalist culture and its elements, but all cultural symbols and elements labelled as ‘liberal’, morally ‘corrupt’, ‘anti-revolutionary’, or ‘un-Islamic’ were severely confronted. This ‘purification’ was particularly targeted at drug smuggling and consumption and sex-related crimes such as prostitution or “unlawful affairs” (Bakhash, 1984). In particular following the events after the seizure of the American Embassy in November that year, the anti-American sentiments were escalated. Therefore, the Western culture was acrimoniously attacked as un-Islamic and contrary to the interests of the nation and Islam.

The anti-Americanism (or anti-Westernisation) was based on the notion that ‘modernisation’ by the Pahlavi regime was the main source of ‘Westoxification’ and the humiliation of the traditional, Shi’ite culture of the masses. (This policy could be vaguely called ‘de-Westernisation’ or ‘de-Westoxification’ of culture.) It was believed that the media had been ‘misused’ and clerical opposition throughout the history had not been against the modern media institutions and technologies. Imam Khomeini, as early as the day of his return from exile, had declared: “The cinema is a modern institution that ought to be used for the sake of educating the people, but as you know, it was used instead to corrupt our youth. It is the misuse of cinema that we are opposed, a misuse caused by the treacherous policies of our rulers” (1981: 258).

After the Revolution broadcasting media were already important tools of the political campaigns of the clergy. Moreover, with the demise of liberal politicians and the consolidation of power by the clergy, mass media were put under more effective clerical control who advocated intensified Islamicisation policies. This also coincided with the ease of the state of terror and assassinations (mini civil war) from early-1981 until mid-1982. This was also the period of the war with Iraq which resulted in a preoccupation of mass media with war propaganda. However, the process of Islamicisation that started at the dawn of the Revolution was intensified and reached a climax by 1982. The content of radio and television were required to reflect Islamic rules and codes and the framework provided by the slogan 'Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic' (VVIR, 1985: Articles 1 & 2).

Based on the broad media policies, locally produced or imported media content were monitored and cleared of any scenes or references to 'undesirable' messages. these messages included explicit sex, free sexual relation, un-covered or improperly covered women's body (usually referred to as *Bee-hejabi* and *bad-hejabi*), alcohol, music and dancing, consumerism, anti-Islamic political propaganda and so on. These materials were recognised as inappropriate for public broadcast, cinema, theatre, and print media for religio-ideological or political reasons. The daily broadcasting time of the two television channels was only five to five and a half hours each. The television channels were dominated by war coverage and propaganda, Shi'ite revolutionary indoctrination, religious sermons, Friday prayers and moralising and didactic educational and informative programmes. Thus, television became an agent of "religious and political socialisation and education, [for] serious content predominate[d] light entertainment" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991: 46).

In the domestic production of films and television programmes rigid codes were required for the portrayal of women as chaste, religious, and maternal, not treated as commodities or used to arouse sexual desires. For women, Islamic coverage (*hijab*) was required and any degree of 'nudity' was resisted and censored rigidly (Naficy, 1987). The use of music in media has been a persistent debate. The VVIR and other media organisations have faced severe restrictions in their choice of music since Islamic jurisprudence distinguishes between different kinds of music and regards some sinful and forbidden. This classification is based on the supposed effects of the forbidden types of

music which are believed to create erotic feelings particularly among the youth. Thus, the Islamicisation resulted in prohibition of the sinful and lecherous music of the pre-revolutionary Iran and West (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). However, as in the case of other ambiguous issues, the distinction between the sanctioned and sinful⁴³ music depends on personal views of *Mujtahids* (Shi'ite Jurisprudents) and thus is occasionally hard to apply. As a result of this indecisiveness, and for the necessity of instilling revolutionary and war propaganda, most of the music in the media has consisted of international revolutionary songs and military marches.

As far as foreign content is concerned, several issues should be noted. After February 1979, the amount of imported material, which dominated television programme under the old regime, was reduced dramatically. In particular, with the escalation of anti-American public sentiments and state policies during 1980-82 internal disputes, "there was a general proscription of American cultural products and Hollywood film as part of the cultural campaign against the 'Great Satan'. Only foreign films with a suitable political orientation were allowed" (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994: 176). Regarding the content genre, materials containing scenes or messages un-acceptable to the Islamic criteria, were totally excluded or, if possible, were 'modified'. During the 1980s, a remarkable proportion of imports contained militaristic and militant films and programmes. Also, the post-revolutionary media imports show a considerable diversification in the terms of the source countries.⁴⁴ Therefore, while before the Revolution imports were dominated by Western (particularly American) products, in the post-revolutionary period the Eastern block and other Third World countries gained remarkable shares (MCIG-GOCRR, 1984).

Despite its evident importance, cultural and media production was not a top priority for the Islamic Republic since it lacked the needed financial, technical, and professional resources. The major political and economic consequences of the

⁴³ *mashrou'* and *na-mashrou'*, permitted and un-permitted according to the sacred Law of Sharia'.

⁴⁴ For instance, *Film* (1986) provides a list of 69 feature movies aired during the new year holidays on TV channels from which 8 were domestic productions and 61 imports from 17 different countries. The United Kingdom and USSR had the highest shares with respectively 14 and 11 films. The 61 movies were imported from Western Europe (including UK) and USA (30); Eastern Europe including USSR (22); Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (6); and China and India (3). The origin of the movies reveal a considerable dependence on European productions along a reasonable balance between the imports from the two global blocs. Also, lower number of imports from USA and other Third World countries is significant.

Revolution, internal rivalries and the war with Iraq, deeply affected the quantitative and qualitative productivity of the state-owned (including the NIRT) as well as private cultural industries. Particularly, in the case of VVIR this was worsened by the financial and technical difficulties resulting from the state budget deficit and Iran's trade embargo. Furthermore, as Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991) suggest, the personnel were mostly trained in another era with very different professional broadcasting values. And yet, the Islamic criteria of production that they were required to follow rigorously was abstract and ambiguous. Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991) also argue that "since the general principle of 'Islamicisation' provides no very specific guidelines for a media policy, even the religious leaders [...] find themselves divided on issues of appropriate content" (Ibid.: 43).

Consequently, during the 1980s the production of domestic movies and programmes for broadcasting and cinemas with acceptable Islamic standards remained embryonic and problematic. As a result of these difficulties and ambiguities, many intriguing or troublesome issues were avoided for several years before, there was a clear verdict (even in cases *fatwas* by Imam Khomeini himself). Also despite the existence of several 'check-points', in some cases the finished programmes were not aired because of their 'un-Islamic' content (see, e.g., Naficy, 1987; Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991, 1994; Gholmakani, May 1992).

Media Frustration and Cultural Resistance

Briefly speaking, the two cultural principles of Islamicisation and confrontation with the un-Islamic brought about a cultural/media environment that lagged behind their expected aims. This was partially because the policies were defined in a situation of mutual relationship, thus, both dramatically open to new, even contradicting, interpretations and also to political manoeuvres. Moreover, their translation into concrete broadcasting strategies proved to be extremely difficult because of various shortages and resistance from some sectors of the public. Moreover, as Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991 & 1994) suggest, the strict Islamicisation-politicisation of formal culture along with suppression of formal political activity in Iran has resulted in generation of resistance and also the politicisation of informal cultural spaces.

The Revolution, however, created its own exiles from the upper class monarchists, middle class secular liberals or radicals, the younger radicals of the lower-middle classes, and others (Abrahamian, 1989). These exiles, estimated to be over two million, formed their political and cultural groupings in other countries (mainly in the USA and Western Europe) and established their own media and other forms of cultural productions that, inevitably, found their ways into Iran. According to Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994), by 1985 approximately forty opposition radio channels beamed into Iran and the increasing exile publication amounted to over one hundred regular titles in 1989. The cultural and media productions of the exiles were very often against the preferences of the Iranian state since they contained ideological elements of pre-revolutionary Westernisation or contemporary oppositional ideologies.

During the 1980s the cultural and mass media spheres inside Iran were dominated by traditionalist, moralising, Islamic, didactic, educational, propagandistic, and informative characteristics. The media lacked technical efficiency and politico-cultural diversity and thus reflected the restricted religious ideology of the state. This condition was the outcome of several factors at national and institutional levels: The religio-ideological orientations of the state, the political requirements of the Revolution, the state of war and the institutional Islamicisation policies combined with organisational technological, financial, and personnel inefficiencies. Hence, there developed a dissatisfaction with, and resistance toward, the formal culture among some sectors of the population. These sectors included primarily the modern middle and upper social classes who were 'internationalised' and had developed cosmopolitan life-styles and tastes under the previous regime. The demands of these sectors nourished a 'cultural black market' which provided the alternative media content of forbidden domestic or foreign print, audio, and video material.

The phrase '*cultural black* market' needs some clarification. It refers to the supply network of a wide range of media content which, though all 'unacceptable', varied in terms of their 'degree of unacceptability' by the Islamic criteria. So, using the metaphor of colours, one may say that the phrase 'cultural black' includes a wide range of light and dark greys as well. The resistance of the Islamic Republic toward production and distribution of illegal (i.e., black) and semi-(il)legal (i.e., grey) material was not equally confronted and actually varied in times and places or among some social classes.

Also one should note that the production of an illegal content was very more harshly confronted than the distribution of the same content. Therefore, less sensitive content were legally or semi-(il)legally produced and with some problems were distributed particularly at more secure times and places and among more eager social classes.

Cultural black market contains in its core an 'underground network of supply'. Here, one may make a distinction between the broader term of 'cultural black market' and the more specific notion of 'underground network'. The cultural black market provides materials with different degrees of (il)legality and sensitivity in terms of law implementation (light grey to dark grey to black). But the 'core' of this market, the underground network, provides the 'black' material which are clearly violating the existing criminal 'laws' (e.g., pornographic material). These laws are more harshly and vigorously implemented, while the less sensitive, though banned, material (such as fashion shows) are occasionally tolerated.

In Iran during the 1980s a powerful cultural black market developed which indeed operated under the control of numerous underground networks. However, it should be noted that most of the available material included less politically oriented content. The production of sensitive and illegal material was prohibited and, because of the dangers involved, was rarely done inside the country and, therefore, smuggling across national borders developed. The underground network marketed pre-revolutionary Iranian as well as foreign classical and contemporary music and feature movies. Also, as Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991: 49) note, during this decade news cassettes were being devised domestically which provided "information, analysis, and music". In addition, a flourishing publication was providing a wide variety of books, "including historical research, economic and social critique of Western capitalism, religious writings, and fiction and poetry" from Iranian and foreign authors.

Finally, the cultural policies of the Islamic Republic during the 1980s, although welcomed and backed by the majority of the population from traditional lower and middle classes, faced numerous difficulties. This was largely because they were implemented within the pre-existing environment of semi-industrialised Iranian society and also this coincided with the global (r)evolution of communications technologies. The dissatisfied and uneasy groups consisted mainly of modernised upper-middle and upper

classes inside Iran. They had benefited from the Shah's era but were deprived of their eminent power and wealth after the Revolution. These classes were estimated around half a million families and had relations with the Iranian exiles settled in the West. There were other reasons for their overall alienation from the Islamic regime; "restrictions on women's dress in the street; the continued ban on music and dancing in public; the propagandistic output of radio, television and the press; the absence of good restaurants and places of public entertainment; and a constant fear of reprisal if they express their disenchantment too loudly or too often" (Hiro, 1985: 206). These groups did not approve the limited and cautiously selected domestic or imported media content and sought alternative channels that were aptly provided by numerous underground networks (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991 and 1994).

VCRs in Iran: 1979-1989

One may also note that the 1980s witnessed, in the 'post-modern context,' two challenging and revolutionary forces. It is possibly just an irony that the cultural aims of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 were challenged by the (r)evolutionary development of global media that developed in the same decade. The unprecedented flow of audio-visual cultural productions across political frontiers during the same decade of the Islamic Revolution suggests a clash of two Revolutions, although this may not necessarily imply a clash between *the revolution* and *the 'counter'-revolution*. The Islamic Revolution was largely the product of an ideological *response* to the age of modernisation which gradually found itself *responding* to the new and powerful cultural and media requirements of the age of post-modernism. This includes, among other features, the expansion of new communications technologies which swiftly and intensely changed the conditions of social life throughout the world. The Islamic Republic had to police expansion of the 'international culture' vis-à-vis the hardware and software of the post-modern media (Welch, 1993). The unique significance of the VCR can be understood in this context. Ironically again, the history of the Islamic Republic coincided with the technological development and global home penetration of the VCRs -the (rebellious) technology of the decade!

Video cassette recorders, as discussed in Chapter 2, transformed the media environment throughout the globe and particularly in the Third World. By Personalising the video consumption of the masses, VCRs remarkably decentralised or even destroyed all national control mechanisms over the distribution and consumption of video materials. It also diversified available media content and became an important channel of entertainment and cultural education, and even a means for political expression. Thus, many countries around the world adapted policies to control its potential and to defend their national culture and media institutions. During the 1980s, VCRs functioned against cultural, moral, religious, media and political tenets of the Islamic Republic and so became one of the most challenging cultural issues of the Iranian state and society.

Critical Presence: February 1979-May 1983

VCR was introduced in Iran before the Revolution, though it was neither popular, well-known or widely used (see e.g., *Sinema dar Video*, no. 1, June 1982; *Soroush*, no. 658, 21 August 1993). VCRs were mainly used for professional and educational purposes in the National Iranian Radio & Television (NIRT) and in some other government ministries or educational organisations (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 3, April 1994). Furthermore, VCRs' home penetration was limited to a very small proportion of upper class. Before the Revolution, on the bases of the regime's cultural policies and its socio-economic base, VCRs were considered a luxury which could be easily imported and utilised (National Iranian Film Archive, n.d.). In other words, there was no definite policy to restrict its import or usage.

Surprisingly enough, according to reports by National Iranian Film Archive⁴⁵ (NIFA, n.d.) and Deputy Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance for Cinema (MCIG-CD, November 1984) published after VCRs prohibition in 1983, VCRs' penetration started to increase immediately after the victory of the Revolution in February 1979.⁴⁶ According to the first report, titled *Video and its mission in Iran*, VCR imports during

⁴⁵ 'Film-Khane-ye Melli-ye Iran', in Persian.

⁴⁶ The content of these reports have been re-printed (partially or completely) frequently in tens of other articles between 1984-1994, though usually without reference (for the first see e. g., *Soroush*, no. 338, 31 May 1986). Here, in the case of the MCIG's report, all references are made to the original report. But, the NIFA's report was not found and so references are made to articles where its content was used (e.g., Gholmakani, May 1992).

the latter days of the Iranian fiscal year (1357, February and March 1979) increased dramatically. This increase continued in the following months and in a 15-month period between June 1979 and September 1980, more than 430,000 sets were imported of which 90% were Betamax format.⁴⁷ Considering the increase in VCR imports as a “‘conspiracy’ by the international Imperialism” to harm the moral foundations of the Islamic Republic, the report claimed that the Provisional Government had failed to understand the underlying conspiracy and act accordingly (MCIG-CD, 1984). The high demand for VCRs during that time has been mainly attributed to the novelty of the technology and the chaotic state of mass media and their immediate control after the Revolution that had limited the content of television and cinema offerings (see, e.g., Kavoshgar, 4 June 1983; and Khosravi *et al.*, May 1993). It has also been suggested that the public, preoccupied with the cause of the Revolution during 1977-78, after February 1979 were anxious to resume ordinary life and discovered VCRs (*Soroush*, no. 658, 21 August 1993).

The intensive importation had several consequences. The price of a VCR fell to Rls. 160,000, from around Rls. 300-400,000 (then the cost of an Iranian car!). Video clubs mushroomed particularly in Tehran and created a system of video rentals considered by the government chaotic and unregulated. They were predominantly established by the members of ‘The Syndicate for Cassette and Gramophone’⁴⁸ who before the Revolution were active in the production and distribution of music tapes and after 1979 had lost their businesses (Khosravi *et al.*, May 1993). The video clubs were making good profits and even the following cuts in the rentals and the abolition of membership dues did not effect their incomes, as they introduced services such as door-to-door distribution and collection of tapes. The reduction in rates was due to the abundance of the rentals and a severe competition between them during 1980-82 (*Film*, no. 19, November 1984). During this period, video clubs functioned with relative freedom. They directly imported and sold video sets and cassettes and rented or sold copied programmes.

In July 1980, the Ministry of Commerce announced that until further notice the importation of VCRs was temporarily prohibited. This was part of President Bani-Sadr’s measures to tackle the increasing economic pressures resulting from the shortage of

⁴⁷ The VCRs were generally Sony 8080 and other models of T-series: T6, T7, T20,....T60 and so on.

⁴⁸ ‘*Ettehadīye-ye Saf’he va Navar-e Gram*’, in Persian.

foreign currency: limiting the imports of luxury goods. The relevant announcement claimed that the rich were pressing to increase the amount of annual imports from 20,000 before the Revolution to 100-150,000 sets during 1358 (1979-80) and to a 'colossal figure' during the early months of the 1359 fiscal year (*Kayhan*, 26 July 1980). When this policy was announced 85,000 video sets were in Customs of which 9,000 were returned to the exporting countries. The rest were gradually distributed in the country largely to the military forces and other newly established revolutionary organisations (MCIG-CD, November 1984).

The temporary decision became a lasting one following the outbreak of war with Iraq a month later and the economic and political changes in the country. With the expansion of the clerical power over the political apparatus, the pressure to control all mass communications media was increased. By early 1981, for instance, the imports of popular and commercial American and Indian films was halted and, along with pre-revolutionary style domestic products, were banned from the screens of television and cinemas. The war-related economic difficulties of every-day life were added to the intensified limitations of the national media content and entertainment facilities in the country. For instance, after the start of the war, the import of new cinema films was halted and archives of old movies were used to fill the screens (*Film*, no. 12, April 1983). As a result of these changes a huge market was created for video cassettes. The few available sets in the country pushed up the price of VCRs to Rls. 500-550,000 six months later and to Rls. 1-1.2m by mid-1981 -again the price of an Iranian car! (see, e.g., *Film*, no. 19, November 1984).

In August 1981, the Revolutionary Prosecutor ordered the temporary closure of video clubs, to be lifted after the establishment of proper organisations and regulations. Immediately, several members of video-club owners established the "Syndicate for Production, Distribution and Duplication of Permitted Video Cassettes"⁴⁹ (hereafter Syndicate). The Syndicate chose its Board of Trustees and was registered⁵⁰ after the completion of legal procedures. Part of these procedures was acquiring permission from a special branch⁵¹ of the Revolutionary Courts, which was responsible for control of

⁴⁹ In Persian: '*Senf-e Towlid va Towzi' va Takthir-e Navarha-ye Mo'jaz-e Video*', also known as '*Ettehadiye-ye Colup-daran-e Video*' (The Syndicate of Video-Club Owners).

⁵⁰ This was abjured in MCIG-CD's November 1984 report.

⁵¹ '*Dadghah-e Mobarezeh ba Monkarat*', in Persian.

indecent and immoral acts in public places. This permission was conditional upon video clubs activities not violating the principles of the Islamic Republic (*Sinema dar Video*, no. 1, June 1982). Also, in 1982 the Deputy Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance for Cinema (MCIG-CD)⁵² required 242 members of the Syndicate active in the duplication of video films to acquire another permission (Khosravi *et al.*, May 1993).

During this period hundreds of video outlets were opened nationally. Since the number of rentals increased rapidly, the Syndicate could not control their activities and so by mid-1982 there were 1,100 licensed and more than 1,900 illegal video rentals with most concentrated in Tehran. Furthermore, many more were not even established in a shop and operated from private residential places and, thus, were called '*video-colup-haye apartemani*' (apartment video-clubs)⁵³. However, there were not very clear guidelines on the functioning of these video clubs, though they 'voluntarily' tried to consider the religious sensitivities of the public and the clerical politicians. In general, this period witnessed a double standard system on the side of video clubs: The visible style even used advertising for more acceptable material while the invisible (or as it was called in Persian, the 'under-table') system distributed the culturally or politically unacceptable material (see, e.g., *Film*, no. 19, November 1984). In addition, despite the existing regulations, video clubs duplicated and distributed thousands of foreign films of which only a few hundred had been given a license and the rest had been banned since March 1980. They also translated and dubbed a few new imports (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 3, April 1994). Based on a list of 100 licensed film titles⁵⁴ published in *Sinema dar Video* (no. 1, June 1982), 91 films were foreign, with more than 70 American and the majority made between 1976-79. From the 9 Iranian titles in the list 6 had been produced and banned before the Revolution under the Shah's regime (such as *Ghav*).

These outlets also abundantly duplicated and distributed thousands of pre-revolutionary Iranian music shows and feature films. Although most of this domestic and foreign material was officially banned, it was being traded or rented with relative ease.

⁵² Actually only in 1986 the Ministry of Islamic Guidance (MIG, previously the Ministry of National Guidance) was renamed as Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance. However here it is invariably referred to as MCIG.

⁵³ Also known as '*video-coloup-haye khaneghi*', (in house video-clubs).

⁵⁴ This was the first in a series of lists of licensed films to be published by the MCIG which due to the prohibition of VCRs was interrupted. This in essence also was abjured in MCIG-CD's November 1984 report.

More than 90% of the tapes consisted of the pre-revolutionary commercial films, with a majority of comic and thriller genres (*Film*, no. 19, November 1984). This even continued until March 1984 when they were confiscated thoroughly. According to existing reports (see, e.g., MCIG-CD, November 1984), during the Revolution and especially in its aftermath thousands of foreign and domestic prohibited titles from pre-revolutionary era were 'taken out' of private archives of the film distribution agencies or state-run organisational archives (e.g., VVIR and NIFA). These programmes, originally in 16mm or 35mm film formats, were transferred into video cassettes by the underground groups. The technology for this re-formatting varied from sophisticated audio-visual systems of film laboratories and cinema theatres to a single white screen. The video copies were usually made by video re-recording of the projected films on cinema screens, with some even from their projection on a piece of white screen on the wall of a residential place. It was also suspected that most sophisticated re-formatting was done in foreign countries (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 3, April 1994).

Because of the problems involved in the domestic production as well as import of new foreign films, however, many film studios entered the video market. They considered dubbing and distributing new foreign films as a profitable business, partly for the fact that they did not have to pay foreign copy-right (*Film*, no. 19, November 1984). Using these methods, almost all of the available films of the history of Iranian cinema from the early stages of film production (so-called '*Film-Farsi*' era) until the eve of the Revolution were transferred into video cassettes. These are estimated between 10 to 15 thousand titles, out of which only around 500 had been given a license by the Syndicate (Khosravi *et al.*, May 1993). Furthermore, there would occasionally appear new programmes produced domestically for video rentals (for instance, *Kooshesh* and *Baharaneh*) or bought from the cinema producers for RIs. 5-7m. Media productions of the Iranian exiles, mainly musical shows and monarchical political propaganda, were also circulated.⁵⁵

During this period, the first cells of VCR's underground networks were established. The prohibited programmes as well as blank cassettes were being brought in by smugglers, travellers, or some politically-motivated groups (MCIG-CD, May 1984). In the highly emotional environment of the society, video outlets were put under

⁵⁵ For instance, see 'Permitted and un-permitted' in *Video-Mahvareh*, 1 (3): 28.

increasing pressure from the clergy for more Islamicisation of media flows. Gradually after February 1979 a dichotomous and blurred distinction was developing between the 'permitted' (*mojaz*) and the 'non-permitted' (*gheir-e mojaz*) media productions. The former were perceived as good, constructive, religious, and thus suitable for the revolutionary, Islamic country. The latter were labelled as morally and politically corrupting, lecherous, indulgent, un-Islamic and thus unacceptable for the Islamic Republic. In April 1982 Hojjatoleslam Hosseini, head of the Special Court, expressed his dissatisfaction with the content of the provided cassettes and claimed that "most of them are either the product of the deteriorating Western culture or propagate Eastern materialistic ideologies. While Islam can not agree with any of them" (*Sinema dar Video*, no. 1, June 1982: 93). He also complained about the shortage of good and constructive movies and warned that lecherous material would be collected and distribution of pornography and music shows would result in the closure of relevant clubs.

The responsibility for the control of the video clubs remained with the Special Court until June 1982 when it was transferred to the newly extended Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance (MCIG). The Ministry immediately ordered the closure of 'apartment video-clubs' and ordered the un-licensed clubs to acquire proper permits from the Syndicate and other relevant state departments. It also required all video rentals to limit their activities to the 'licensed' cassettes and to submit the 'unlicensed' programmes for issuance of possible permits. Furthermore, MCIG, under the guidelines of an anti-Western campaign coordinated by the *Majlis*, enjoined the clubs to change their names from foreign to Iranian.⁵⁶ Prior to that, names such as Video Rama, Video City, Audio-Visual, Video Kings, Star House, Camera, and Tele-sonic were common. In addition, the Syndicate was obliged to have close cooperation with VVIR, the Revolutionary Committees, the Committee for the Affairs of the War Refugees and alike and was still subjected to the supervision of the Revolutionary Courts' special branch (*Sinema dar Video*, no. 1, June 1982).

The activities of legal video clubs transformed VCR into a developing media which even gained its very special journal. The first issue of the journal *Cinema in Video*⁵⁷ was published in June 1982, but was not regular and the second issue appeared in

⁵⁶ This was requested from all the public places. For the case of cinemas see Naficy (1987).

⁵⁷ '*Sinema dar Video*', in Persian.

October 1982. These two issues carried interesting articles, reports, and advertisements about cinema and video industries. Advertisements were common and the issues exhibited respectively 27 and 34 pages of colour commercials and announcements from video-clubs and the relevant businesses. These included information on new products and available services such as repairs, video recordings of ceremonies, re-formatting from Super 8 to video and so on. The Journal from its third issue in March 1983 changed its name to *Film*⁵⁸ and from the next issue was published regularly.

It seems useful to note that video recording of family ceremonies (marriages, funerals and alike) also gained popularity. In 1982 there were more than 100 companies involved in the business, though they mainly lacked the necessary skills. In 1982 one owner of such a company noted that many families who did not yet own VCRs still recorded their ceremonies in the hope of future purchases (see *Sinema dar Video*, no. 2, October 1982).

However, in 1982 VCR was increasingly becoming a national issue with significant cultural, political, and economic implications. VCR was seemingly heading toward an uncertain future. On the one hand, there were signs of an increasing awareness among the revolutionary power elite that video was a remarkable technology that could negatively influence culture, politics, economy, and the embryonic cultural/media policies of the state. For instance, the report by Deputy Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance for Cinema (MCIG-CD, 1984) decisively charged that the culturally and morally corrupt groups and 'gangs', the monarchists, the smugglers and financial opportunists, some employees of foreign Embassies and many others were active in the importation, duplication, and distribution of particularly pornography, music shows and other 'Western nasties' in the Islamic country. The report also charged that the Baathist regime of Iraq had distributed pre-recorded video cassettes so abundantly that their price had fallen to Rls. 500 compared to Rls. 6,000 for the blank tapes in the market (Ibid.). As a result, pressures were increased for the Islamicisation of video market and video clubs were put under closer control by the authorities. These changes had been made possible by the general shifts in the power structure and the severe repercussions of the war with Iraq and the guerrilla warfare. As a result, in June 1982 the Syndicate announced that it

⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, this journal has become one of the leading professional journals on cinema and film in Iran until now.

would not accept new applications for licenses in Tehran and some other major cities. The reason given was the saturation of the market in these cities (*Sinema dar Video*, no. 1, June 1982).

But, on the other hand, the video-club business was thriving. The MCIG-CD's report, based on statistics published by the Syndicate for the year 1361 (1982/83), revealed that massive annual revenues of the 1,100 licensed clubs between 1980-82 amounted to Rls. 29,550,000,000, more than Rls. 25,000,000 per club. This was considered one of the most profitable businesses in the country. These clubs earned Rls. 3,300m from membership fees, 16,500m from cassette rentals, and 5,400m from VCR rentals. Also the income of the duplication stores was estimated at an additional Rls. 4,350m. Yet, these figures show the income of the 1,100 'registered' rentals from distribution of legal cassettes and do not include income from illegal cassettes or the huge revenues of the remaining 2,000 unlicensed video-clubs. Thus, the real income of video market must be several times higher (MCIG-CD, 1984). However, toward the end of 1982, there were signs of pessimism about the future of VCR market among club owners. For instance, a member of the central committee of the Syndicate in October 1982 lamented that the future is uncertain and lay in the hands of the authorities (*Sinema dar Video*, no. 2, October 1982).

Prohibition of VCR: May 1983

During the period from 1979 until its prohibition in 1983, several interrelated issues made VCR one of the major campaigns of the clergy, Islamic courts, and Islamic Committees as part of Islamicisation policy. These challenges finally resulted in the formal prohibition of VCR and all types of video tapes. On May 23, 1983, Dr Mohammad Khatami, a political hard-liner and the newly appointed Minister of Culture & Islamic Guidance, in a radio-television interview announced the prohibition policy. He claimed that video clubs' activities from the outset have been "religiously un-permitted" (*na-mashrou'* -against the Sacred Law of Islam) since they have been preoccupied with distribution of material predominantly contrary to the ethical criteria of the Islamic Republic (Kavoshgar, 4 June 1983). This ended the open presence of VCRs and the activities of video clubs in Iran. It should be noted here that the prohibition policy was

not coordinated since it was not adopted by the *Majlis* or other national policy-making bodies. It was merely a policy adopted by the MCIG which had authority only over the activities of video clubs and video productions. The Minister announced that “the new regulations concerning the presence of VCR in Iran and its utilisation for religiously permitted (*mashrou*) aims by the individuals and revolutionary institutions will be set in the long-term” (in Kavoshgar, 4 June 1983: 35). The new regulations were never announced and so the lack of a national policy left the VCRs’ fate in Iran undetermined for the coming years.

Here it seems useful to note that during this period very little explanation was given for the reasons behind the prohibition policy. The society at large was preoccupied with the far-reaching cultural, political, and economic repercussions of the revolutionary conditions as well as the effects of the war. Hence, very few articles appeared in the existing limited and harmonised press on the policy, with the majority of the few printed articles confirming the ‘revolutionary and decisive decision’. For example, two articles were published by Kavoshghar (a pseudonym?) in *Soroush* (nos. 194 and 195, 4 and 11 June 1983). These two articles, titled *The Image of Indulgence Disappears* and *Towards a Clear Picture*, depicted the VCR as the continuation of, and replacement for, the cabarets, discos, casinos, bars, cinemas, and pleasure houses of the 1960s and 1970s. The first article claimed that “the culture being diffused through VCR was that of worldliness and atheism, mammonism, sensuality and hedonism, money-worshipping, and inattention toward ethical principles” (*Soroush*, no. 194: 33).

The MCIG did very little to explain the aims of the prohibition policy and published only one report titled *Video and its mission in Iran* (MCIG-CD, November 1984). The report is an important source for the aims of this research since it may lead us to some explanation on the reasons behind the policy. Based on this report and other available evidence (mostly worded and published in the ensuing years) one may conclude with some speculation the reasons behind the strict prohibition policy of May 1983 as follows:

I) VCR was generally used by the globalised, rich, and supposedly ‘counter-revolutionary’ upper classes. At least in the first years after 1979, the majority of lower and middle class traditional people seemed to be satisfied with government's cultural proposals and practices. But the modern, globalised, and affluent groups continued the

consumption of their preferred cultural programmes through underground mass media in the immediate post-revolutionary era. Based on a sample of the published list of 145 video-clubs in *Sinema dar Video* (no. 1, June 1982), more than 130 were located in the northern half of Tehran, the residential neighbourhoods of the upper-middle and upper classes. The remaining 15 were situated around the *Bazaar* in Central Tehran and southern districts of the city which include the industrial areas and are occupied mainly by the lower-middle and lower classes. This clearly shows the class characteristic of the VCR during then. The increasing penetration of VCRs in Iran was the best way for the globalised higher class to gain relative independence from Islamic government's media. The desirability of VCR for particularly the higher class becomes more obvious when one considers the severity of the structural shortages of entertainment in society due to new problems in outings and limits in home entertainment.

Furthermore, the gradual diffusion of VCR among the lower classes posed a similarly important problem for the state since these classes constituted its support base. By May 1983 at least half a million VCR sets had been imported into Iran⁵⁹ (MCIG-CD, November 1984). Prior to that, the Chair of the Syndicate' Board of Trustees in June 1982 had announced that in Tehran most of the applicants for new video-club permission were from the central and southern districts. Furthermore, the number of nightly rentals and cassette sales in these lower-middle and lower class districts were much higher than those in the upper class areas of the north of the city (*Sinema dar Video*, no. 1, June 1982). This was possibly true since, in the absence of particularly cheap entertainment facilities in the society, VCR had appeared as a relatively cheap and convenient channel for the lower classes (*Soroush*, no. 658, 21 August 1993). This coincided with, and harmonised the, increasing demands of the 'revolutionary forces' (the masses, the poor) to destroy the *Taghuti* (idolatrous) culture of the rich in order to abolish class discrimination in terms of cultural and media consumption. The demand for 'cultural equality' was violated by VCRs' potential to serve its supposedly rich owners

II) VCR competed with, and attracted the audience of, the national mass media, especially film. After the Revolution television and radio (see previous section), theatre, and cinema were in a transitional and unproductive stage (see, e.g., MCIG-GOCRR,

⁵⁹ Fisher (July 1983) estimated the number of VCRs in Iran in 1982 around 240 thousand sets and had predicted it to increase to 285 thousand for the subsequent year.

1984: Khosravi *et al.*, May 1992). In particular the film industry was immobilised; the number of movie theatres was reduced from 450 in 1979 to around 270, with more than 70 concentrated in Tehran while many cities lacked one. The film production was complicated, disordered and confused and could provide on average 10 titles annually, from which yet a few were not sanctioned for their low quality (Gholmakani, May 1992). In this context, many professionals, the Islamic associations, and the newly appointed authorities in the broadcasting media and particularly cinema industry found a great hazardous potential in VCR against their cultural and economic interests. Apparently, these groups were very influential in the prohibition of VCRs for public uses,⁶⁰ though they did not object and in fact secured their right for professional uses. As an article titled “‘The Kind Monster’, or ‘How we learned to[...] like video’” (*Film*, no. 157, May 1993) reveals, Dr. Khatami and his new team of deputies were the most influential opponents of video-clubs’ free activities and in fact their first ‘condition’ to accept the responsibility of the affairs of Iranian cinema industry was the proscription of VCRs. Furthermore, the article concludes that the policy was announced even before the administration of the affairs was officially given to the Ministry. This policy was aimed at removing the competitors and to allowing the Iranian film industry, at least for a while, to resume activity free of stiff competition.⁶¹ The officials were aware of the gigantic and increasing revenues of the video market and thought that, with free video-club’ activity, the film industry would be deprived of this investment and will not have a good box-office revenues (MCIG-GOCRR, 1984).

⁶⁰ See also MCIG-CD’s May 1984 report which starts with a comparison between television, cinema, and video and concludes that “home video [...] holds all the dangerous characteristics of the previous media” (Ibid.: 2). And it only then discusses the cultural, social, economic and political implications of VCRs in Iran.

⁶¹ Also in order to nourish the then stagnant national film industry, other policies were implemented. Accordingly, in March 1984 the import of foreign films for cinema theatres by private companies was banned and was monopolised by the newly established *Farabi Cinematic Foundation* (FCF) and all copies of pre-revolutionary Iranian and foreign films were confiscated from archives and distribution agencies. Also, the industry was exempted from import tariff, cinema tickets and taxes of foreign movies were increased (from 20 to 25%), and taxes of domestic films decreased (from 20 to 5%). However, the policy, as far as the national film industry is concerned, proved to be effective. The cinema attendances for foreign films in Tehran increased from 5 in 1982 to respectively 7, 8.6, and 5.6 in subsequent years until 1985. In the same period, 1982-1985, Iranian films enjoyed an increase from 2 in 1982 to 1.5, 4.3, and 7.6 (figures in million). By 1985, possibly for the first time in the history of Iranian cinema, domestic productions attracted more viewers into movie theatres than foreign imports (for statistics see, *Film*, no. 50, June 1987; Gholmakani, May 1992; and *Film*, no. 12, May 1984).

III) VCR was becoming an alternate channel for production and consumption of the ‘un-desired’ and prohibited culture. The available content was dominated by dubbed foreign (mainly American) films as well as the pre-revolutionary Persian cinematic films and television music and dance shows. Contrary to the newly imposed cultural policies, these programmes were smuggled out from archives, copied, distributed and simply dominated the markets. This in fact was against the ‘politically vital’ Islamicization policy of the Islamic Republic since it directly affected their mass media policies and also it indirectly introduced alternative (Western) cultures and political systems.

VCR enabled people to constantly violate the official policy of purging the material and symbols of the Western and *Taghuti* culture. VCR functioned contrary to the Islamicisation and anti-Westernisation principles of the state and maintained the existence of Iranian and foreign stars and idols (singers, dancers, actors, actresses, fashions and alike). Given the general fear among the clergy of the monopoly of Western communications technologies and their usage against the interests of the oppressed nations around the world, VCR was depicted as one of the most influential technologies for the cultural domination of the Third World and particularly the Islamic Iran (see, e.g., Fahimi-far, 15 July 1992). The MCIG’s November 1984 report claimed that some documents found in the American Embassy (‘the US Spy Den’), after its seizure in November 1980, verify the political importance of these cultural/media programmes and the VCRs’ role in their dissemination. Also, according to the documents, American authorities in Washington allegedly had advised the Embassy to “support and facilitate by all mean the imports of VCR sets and all kinds of cassettes in order to expand the Western culture through the VCRs” (MCIG, November 1984: 5). It was also claimed that following the production of undesired films in the country, the video cassette system was being used for “production of even the lowest animalistic sexual scenes in the Islamic country” (MCIG, n.d., in Solh-joo, April 1994: 98).

IV) There was great concern that available cassettes would revive the anti-religious values of the old regime and demolish the Islamic, revolutionary values, conscience and consciousness among the masses (see, MCIG-CD, November 1984; and Fahimi-far, 15 July 1992, among many others). This was especially hazardous since these were being propagated as part and parcel of the revolutionary national politico-cultural identity. The destruction of traditional values and codes were considered as a pre-

requisite for the politico-cultural subordination of Iran by the Western powers (see e.g., Fischer, 1983; Fischer and Abedi, 1990). Allegedly, VCRs had violated all the inviolable traditional and religious ethical values and moral codes. It also had become an inseparable item of furniture and culture of 'pleasure houses' along the drugs, 'gambling devices', alcohol, pornographic material, crime, and prostitution (see, Ibid. and Kavoshgar, 4 June 1983). On the other hand, being a home- and family-based medium, VCRs were threatening familial values which were being re-instated in the society based on a belief on the centrality of family and familial values in the Islamic ideology.⁶²

The MCIG-CD's November 1984 report lists some implications of the VCRs in post-revolutionary Iran. Four out of six exclusively refer to the familial values and particularly the status of the youth and adolescents: "1) The audience of VCR is the most authentic reference of the Islamic culture -i.e., family- and its deadly potentials directly influence the nucleus of the family; 2) It destroys communications and ties between family members and at least approves indolence in home life; 3) It again brings the indulgent and uncontrollable culture of the foreign films and [music] shows into the sanctuary of home and directly influences the children and adolescents who are under Islamic education in the school, finally resulting in duality and lack of identity in their personalities; 4) It disconnects the family from the radio and television and thus from the events in the society and addicts the family members to the consumption of repeated, mis-educating, and indulgent films" (Ibid.: 8).

V) VCR had massive economic impact in terms of foreign currency for the annual purchase of hundreds of thousands of VCRs and millions of cassettes. This becomes more evident when one considers the crisis of the national economy during 1979-82. The annual cost of VCR purchases was approximately Rls. 100bn. Also, the official price of legally imported VCRs and cassettes prior to the restriction on their imports is estimated to be Rls. 260bn. (Yarandi, September/October 1994). This still does not include the weekly average of 25,000 illegal cassettes sold in the country (NIFA, n.d.). The national financial expenses of VCRs had already prompted a ban on their imports that, because of the thriving smuggling, had failed. Reports published after the prohibition policy in 1983, although they do not directly refer to the national financial costs of VCR market as a

⁶² On this see the Preamble and Article 10 of the 1979 Constitution.

reason behind the prohibition policy, they regard the internal economic consequences as significant. The MCIG-CD's report observes that the video-rentals are operated with very small investments, are largely not registered and hence do not pay taxes, do not need skilled man-power, and are increasing rapidly. Yet it notes that the club ownership has colossal revenues from its 'immoral business' (MCIG-CD, November 1984).

After its organisation in 1982, the video-club business had developed into a new and profitable, hence powerful, branch of the informal, shadow economy (*Soroush*, no. 658, 21 August 1993). It was claimed that there was enough evidence to confirm that the Syndicate had relied on its colossal incomes to impress the cultural domain of media consumption and even 'buy' state policies in this regard (MCIG-CD, n.d. in Solh-joo, April 1994). Whatever the Syndicate's activities, it was supervising a very profitable and 'interest-conscious' network and, therefore, could act as a rich and powerful pressure group in political and cultural issues.

VI) The policy to export the revolution had necessitated the establishment of an exemplar state for the Muslim World in all aspects including the cultural and media policies. With the establishment of the Islamic Republic a widening tension was created among the Middle Eastern Muslim countries and Iran because of the latter's puritanical Islamic as well as republican nature. The tension encompassed ideological-religious as well as political structural discourses (Hiro, 1985). The Iranian state was unequivocally motivated to establish a divine and religiously just society in which pure and authentic *Islamic ethics* uncontestedly guided attitudes and behaviours in public and private. From the beginning of 1982, this motive was augmented following the relative consolidation of political power by the clergy and also due to Iranian achievements in the war fronts and its internationalisation⁶³. The image of this model society was to enlighten the Muslim nations and states. In the exemplar Islamic country, apparently there was no place, among many other things, for pornography, music, and other 'indecent' media content. The VCR was therefore serving as a medium of the 'counter-culture' contrasting the official Islamic culture. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the tendency to set an Islamic exemplar society, to some extent, strengthened the internal reasons for the prohibition of VCR in Iran. This reason, however, was never expressed by the authorities.

⁶³ On this see, Hiro (1985), Bakhash (1984), Bashiriyeh (1984).

VII) VCR had become a 'political medium' and the revolutionary state was afraid that this eventually would develop. As discussed earlier, the Islamic Republic was devising its own political culture that required a disruptive and constant transformation in the 'symbolic politics' or 'politics of signs' and culture.⁶⁴ This was largely based on the traditional, Islamic value systems, resulting in the politicisation of culture. Therefore, VCRs' potential to damage, or simply not correspond to, the ethical, moral, and traditional norms and codes could be considered as at least its political implication (see Fahimi-far, 1 July 1992). This political 'danger' was sensed from vast majority of the available programmes: both pre-revolutionary Iranian and new Western productions. Needless to repeat that VCR market was dominated by foreign content. The new productions of Iranian exiles (mainly music) with pre-revolutionary styles and the more distinct political propaganda of the expelled monarchist forces were available in Iran even before the May 1983 prohibition policy (MCIG, August 1990). Also, after the expulsion of liberals from power and the suppression of the militaristic opposition, it was evident that VCR market would soon become a channel for the political programmes of the exiled ideologies.

Having themselves used the effective small media (such as audio-cassettes and photocopies) during the 1977-79 uprisings, the revolutionary elite was insightfully aware of the potentials of the more sophisticated and significant VCR technology. This reason though was not articulated. However, despite the apparent primary function of VCR as an entertainment medium in the following decade, occasionally it served as an alternative, small media. Prior to 1983, the cultural and more politically explicit programmes of the opposition groups were circulated among some sectors of VCR owners. These programmes were usually recorded from exiled groups' television channels or stage performances in the United States.

VIII) The expansion of VCRs could undermine the war effort. Following the developments in the political hierarchy and destruction of guerrilla groups by mid-1982, the war effort was convincingly labelled as an Islamic *Jihad* (holly crusade) alongside its patriotic feature.⁶⁵ The increasing reassessment of the war in Islamic terms, which resembled the heroic history of early Islam, had several effects in internal cultural policies

⁶⁴ On this see, Fischer & Abedi (1990).

⁶⁵ On this see, Chubin (1989), Chubin & Tripp (1988), and Hiro (1985), among many others.

of the state. The war was increasingly viewed as a war imposed on the righteous and sacred nation by the 'evil forces of the Western and Eastern infidelity and materialism' (Chubin 1989). Hence, the war effort was a sacred defence not only of the country but also of the moral-religious ideology of the nation and its fruit -the Islamic Republic. In short, according to the official view, the Iran-Iraq war was the confrontation of The Right (*hagg*) with The Wrong (*batil*). This approach resulted in the Islamification and, hence, popularisation of the war-related campaign. Lacking any decisive financial, technological, or political support from most of the Arab and industrial countries (including the two superpowers), Iran's principal asset in its 'defensive Jihad' was its so-called strategy of 'human waves'. This could only be, and was made, possible by the reliance of the regime on "the superior commitment of its populace" and their belief in the "positive Shi'ite values of martyrdom (*shahadat*) and sacrifice" (Ibid.: 8 & 9). The popularity of the war was not only because of the millions of voluntary fighters (*Basijis*) who constituted a remarkable proportion of the manpower and the *Martyrs*, but also for the financial as well as psychological support of the vast majority of the nation for the moral-religious *Jihad* (Hiro, 1985).

In this context of magnified Islamic and nationalistic consciousness, the devastating repercussions and particularly the human costs of the 'human wave' strategy in the 'Imposed War' created a powerful cultural/psychological environment. In this environment emotions of heroism, sacrifice, and martyrdom-seeking as well as grief and sadness for the losses were propagated and, hence, prevailed as a national and religious responsibility.⁶⁶ This was sharply violated by the 'entertainment'-oriented nature of VCR and its predominantly hedonistic content. However, this contradiction, though not elaborated in the published reports, could have understandably played a role in the prohibition of VCR.

Underground life of VCR: May 1983-1989

Whatever the reasons or motives behind its prohibition in 1983, VCR did not vanish and instead started an underground, illegal life in Iran which lasted for the coming

⁶⁶ On the emotional/psychological rituals and discourses during the war years see articles in the special issue of *Culture, Medicine & Psychiatry* (Vol.12, no.1) such as those by Fischer (1988), and Good & Good (1988).

decade. This caused many wider economic and political obscurities and had many implications in the cultural/media sphere including production, duplication and distribution, and consumption of video programmes. The policy, however, did change the stance of VCR as a cultural and public issue. The prohibition policy primarily meant that VCR and subsequently VCR-related publications would be absent from the public spaces including particularly the print media.⁶⁷

In the immediate weeks preceding 23rd May 1983 almost a dozen articles appeared in semi-official national newspapers and journals.⁶⁸ But after that VCR became a 'forgotten area' by the journalists. This resulted in the disappearance of VCR-related discussions from the dailies and periodicals. The only journal with a particular interest in VCR, *Sinema dar Video*, that from its third issue in March 1983 had changed its name to *Film* but had carried articles and advertisements on VCR, moved away from VCR and involved itself with the film industry. The editorial of the fourth issue announced that because of VCR's 'disagreement' with the needs and interests of the society and its prohibition, "publication of a professional magazine on the matter is meaningless" (*Film*, no. 4, July 1983: 2). However the issue still had few advertisements on VCR repairs and video recordings of familial ceremonies. *Film* from its following month's issue was thoroughly cleansed of its main interest.

Subsequent articles on VCR published between 1984-1989 were very few and largely consisted of translations from foreign sources on the relevant technical issues or statistical reports on VCR in other countries. These were mainly published in *Soroush*, the official weekly journal of the VVIR.⁶⁹ Also there would rarely appear speculative articles on the negative and dangerous functions of VCRs in Iran. The first article of this

⁶⁷ It is important here to note that, due to the problematic retrieval system of Iranian press of the period, possibly some articles have not been noticed. However, the main picture here for the articles containing VCR in the title or as the main subject is conclusive. The main source for finding the references has been a quarterly published by the MCIG named *Majmoo'-e Magalat-e Farhangi dar Nashriyat-e Jomhuri-ye Eslami-e Iran* (Index of Cultural Articles in the Publications of the Islamic Republic of Iran).

⁶⁸ See, e.g., 'VCR: The promoter of the *Taghuti* culture' in the daily *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* (7 April 1983) 'The question is: Which culture video is promoting?' and 'A report on video-clubs and their activities' in the weekly *Javanan-e Emruz* (nos. 845 & 846, 16 & 22 May 1983).

⁶⁹ For instance, see 'The advantages and disadvantages of video and film', 'Lighting in video productions with high quality', and 'Special effects in video productions of outer-space genre', respectively in *Soroush* (nos. 273, 307 & 310, 19 January, 5 & 26 October 1985). Also see a series of reports on television and video in other countries (Argentina, Australia, USSR, and Indonesia) in *Soroush* published during the last quarter of 1986.

kind (besides the two articles by Kavoshgar, op. cit.) appeared in *Kashaneh*, 4 February 1984 titled *Video: Scientific education or cultural lavishness*. Also there was a reprint from MCIG-CD's November 1984 report, *Video and its mission in Iran*, in *Soroush* (no. 338, 31 May 1986) and the newspaper *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* published an 11 part article between 30 December and 20 January 1986 titled 'When will serious action against the cultural conspiracy of the [global] arrogance begin?' This article frequently referred to VCR and 'video-culture' and attacked the government and police forces for their indecisiveness. These occasional articles do not carry any hard evidence. The scarcity of information on VCRs in the period between 1984 and 1989 is partially attributable to a lack of scientific and even mere statistical studies.

Meanwhile, VCR-related information was shifted into classified and semi-secret bulletins of various state organisations such as the MCIG, VVIR, Higher Council of Cultural Revolution, the Islamic Revolutionary Committees (IRC), and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRG). These bulletins, only circulated internally or distributed among other establishments, became the main sources for VCR-related news and analysis during 1984-1989. (However, these classified bulletins were unavailable for this research.) Also, foreign and exiled press treated VCR news inside Iran as a hot issue.⁷⁰ Here, due to lack of scientific research and the scarcity of even journalistic references during the period, analysis of the effects of the prohibition policy relies essentially on the material published during the second phase of public discussion on VCRs in Iran after 1989 (as well as anecdotal information from interviews and personal observations).

The prohibition policy of May 1983 brought the embryonic domestic video productions and VCR-related services (such as dubbing) to an end and prompted an instantaneous formal closure of video-clubs. It also deprived the society of any formal control mechanisms on the circulating material. The policy apparently did not create a 'cultural quarantine' since it failed to terminate the presence of VCRs or the consumption of even the 'most undesired' content in Iran. Instead it pushed the VCR into the 'invisible' and hence uncontrollable (or even dark?) side of the society.

Following the May announcement, laws were extended to authorise the police forces and the courts to prosecute individuals involved in the smuggling, trade and

⁷⁰ See, for instance, various articles in *Variety* (e.g., Iran cracks down, 19 February 1986); *Kayhan* (London) (12 September 1985); *Los Angeles Times* (11 December 1982) among many others.

distribution of video sets and cassettes. Accordingly, an operation was co-ordinated by the MCIG, the IRC and other police forces, and the judiciary to confiscate all illegal media content. In the operation, during the last quarter of 1362 (winter 1984), video tapes were collected from known video-clubs and duplication centres as well as cinema films from archives and distributing agencies (MCIG-CD, November 1984; Gholmakani, May 1992).

However, for some period after May 1983 the illegal flow of VCR sets and tapes from the borders and their circulation inside the country was decreased. But, evidence shows that very soon most of the 'video-clubs' re-established secret distribution of available cassettes to their trusted customers (*Soroush*, no. 658, 21 August 1993). During the first months after May, almost all of the obtainable cassettes were domestic or foreign ones which had been distributed earlier. For months neither new foreign products nor new VCR sets appeared in the market. However, this did not last for long since the subsequent increases in the prices and the demands for new programmes created a profitable market and eventually revived the smuggling networks (MCIG, 1990).

Meanwhile, available VCRs were used extensively through frequent rentings or borrowings. New sets were provided with relative ease by smugglers and main suppliers. The new sets were largely imported from some of the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf (especially Dubai) by sea and then carried on land with all kinds of transportation means to all cities (though again largely vis-à-vis Tehran). Following the global decrease in prices and their ample supply by smugglers, VCR was transformed from a luxury into an essential home appliance. Subsequently, its importance as a communications medium (technology of entertainment and education) and prestige symbol brought about a remarkable market for new video sets and cassettes. Potential customers could find new VCRs through their acquaintances or skilled middle men (IRC, 1990 in MCIG, 1990). All procedures of smuggling and marketing of VCRs were carried out under severe caution and secrecy and this situation was suitable for any kind of fraud (*Soroush*, no. 659, 28 August 1993; *Ghardoon*, no. 29-30, August-September 1993).

Moreover, after 1983 tens of thousands of new programmes were smuggled into the country. These were provided by a few main cassette suppliers who had gradually gained skill and fame for their jobs. These organised smugglers were concentrated in

some of the busiest shopping centres in and around the *Bazaar* area in Central Tehran. Other tapes were also brought by transit drivers, pilots, foreign diplomats, passengers and alike mainly for their personal use (IRC-BPVPS, 1990 in MCIG, 1990). The original copies ('*madar*' in Persian; lit. 'mother') were relatively expensive and were rapidly copied and re-copied. The duplication network was apparently so well-organised and skilled that it could make at least 250 copies of any new cassette in a short time. Then any of these copies of new 'hits', being highly demanded, were hired and viewed on average by 11,500 family gatherings every month! (Ibid.). The copies had yet a longer way to reach their customers. The 'mother' copies were sold to the secondary duplicators in the districts of Tehran or in other cities who then would re-duplicate and distribute them among the secret video-clubs or *Video Men* operating in residential neighbourhoods or work places. These agents, then, would copy new programmes usually by connecting two VCR sets to satisfy their numerous waiting customers. The loss of quality, apparently, was a result of this system of re-duplication of re-copied cassettes (*Soroush*, no. 659, 28 August 1993).

New cassettes largely consisted of American, Indian, and Turkish films with their usual genres as well as martial arts movies from Hong Kong, South Korea, and China. Also, new foreign (American, Western European, Indian, Turkish, and Arabic) music and dance shows as well as productions of exiled Iranians from Los Angeles enjoyed a remarkable share of the market (MCIG, 1990; *Soroush*, no. 658, 21 August 1993). One noticeable effect of the new wave of uncontrolled flow of foreign material in the aftermath of 1983 was the introduction of foreign material with their English, Hindi, Turkish, and Chinese original sound to the Iranian general audiences. The general audience, even in the pre-revolutionary era, had never been exposed to such a large amount of foreign media content. Actually, from the tens of thousands of new products imported since 1983 only a handful of exiled productions were in Persian. (The possible effects of this are yet to be studied.)

However, entertainment dominated VCR uses in Iran. This was even obvious from the classification of cassettes by the Islamic Revolutionary Committees' Bureau for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Sin (IRC-BPVPS) in April 1990:

“1) pornographic (i.e., *mostahjan*) films produced in America and Western countries; 2) foreign feature films in original languages that mostly contain indecent (i.e., *mobtazal*) scenes and misleading and fictional stories that promote immoral behaviours (such as *Terminator 1 & 2* and *Rambo 1, 2 & 3*). Some of these movies use school-age boy and girls (such as *The Last Virgin*); 3) Turkish films in original Turkish language which are typically *mobtazal* (indecent) and empty and are mainly imported through ground routes from Turkey; 4) new Indian movies which are smuggled usually pre-recorded as blank tapes and contain dance scenes and *mobtazal* actions; 5) different types of foreign music shows that, apart from the problem of indecency (*ebtezal*), with their high techniques attract and persuade young viewers to assimilate themselves in the sense of morals and behaviours with their dominant contents of sex change, un-limited violence, nihilism anarchism and so on; 6) Iranian variety shows, music, and anti-Sharia’ and immoral jokes of pre-revolutionary era along the new ones duplicated and distributed inside the country or abroad; 7) dubbed Iranian or foreign *mobtazal* movies from pre-revolutionary era then screened in cinemas or aired on television; 8) new television productions of Iranian exiles with their typical counter-revolutionary and anti-religious messages” (IRC-BPVPS, April 1990; quoted in MCIG, 1990).

Of special note in this excerpt is the VCR-related terminology derived from the general discourses of the post-revolutionary era. This discursive terminology of criminal, un-Islamic conducts, does not use direct terms and instead exploits mainly Arabic words that may or may not explicitly lead to their intended meanings. The meanings of these terms were mostly developed after the Islamic Revolution. For instance, Aryanpoor & Aryanpoor (7th print, 1992) Persian-English Dictionary, compiled in the 1970s, defines *mobtazal* as “commonplace, boring, dull, prosy, routine, unimaginative, and cliché” among others. It also defines *mostahjan* as “obscene, immodest, scurrilous, and pornographic.”⁷¹ However, according to the criminalised terminology of post-revolutionary Iran, the former means a person involved with, and the instruments used for, sinful and voluptuous living. This meaning, hence, includes individuals and their devices used for the consumption of media content containing scenes of music, dance, gambling, free sexual relations and so on. Also, *Mostahjan* was particularly used to refer

⁷¹ Also see Haim’s New Persian-English Dictionary (1968), compiled in the 1960s, where defines *mobtazal* simply as commonplace and hackneyed and *mostahjan* as obscene and immodest.

to all audio-visual pornographic material including photos, magazines and video tapes. Based on this terminology, the video market could be said to have been dominated by *mobtazal* material, though the *mostahjan* types were also available.

In the aftermath of the 1983 prohibition policy until VCRs' legalisation in 1993, the small suppliers and customers adopted new strategies to maintain their activity. Actually these were also practised partially during prior pressure periods. Among these techniques are: door-to-door (or shop-to-shop) distribution by *Video-Men*; expansion of small-scaled 'apartment video-clubs' in residential neighbourhoods; adoption of a system of several-nightly or weekly cassette rental; sharing of the rented, borrowed, or purchased tapes with relatives, neighbours, colleagues and friends; introduction of cassette suppliers and customers through trusted intermediaries; and duplication of cassettes using two connected VCR sets.

After May, 'apartment video-clubs' operating from houses were revived or set up. These houses were conspicuous for their unusual daily coming in and going out. Thus, in order to reduce the number of daily visitors and so the dangers, these 'secret clubs' adopted several (usually a four) nightly rental system that very soon was changed into weekly (*Soroush*, no. 659, 28 August 1993). Yet, they took on the distribution and collection of cassettes to and from their customers' houses or work-places. They hired young men, known as *Video Man* (*Vidiyo-man*, in Persian!). A *Video Man* would carry 15-20 tapes few days a week to the customers in a small neighbourhood of the city and replace new cassettes with those exchanged in their previous 'appointment'. By this, the customers could choose from the limited -albeit changing- cassettes of his 'video man', unless he wished to change him for any reason.

The customers, in turn, would view programmes and exchange them with their 'co-sharers' who had obtained their cassettes in a similar way. The customer from time to time would wish to change his *Video Man* for his inability to provide satisfactory amount of new cassettes or programmes appropriate to the cultural tastes and familial considerations of the customer. This customer could rely on his friend or relatives for information about other neighbourhood *Video Men* and their speciality and cassettes (*Soroush*, no. 659, 28 August 1993).

This method of cassette distribution needed a relatively small investment compared to any other business; Rls. 1-1.5m or enough to afford around a hundred tapes and one or two VCRs. But it was absolutely profitable. So, a noticeable number of young men from the lower classes, in need of money and employment, established their own rental services as the only or second source of income. The income of any *Video Man* could easily amount to half a million Rials per month. This income, which was several times more than the monthly salary of an average public servant, could be earned by serving 30 customers, each 3-4 cassettes per week, and on average Rls 1,000-1,500 per cassette per week (*Soroush*, no. 659, 28 August 1993).

It has been alleged by the MCIG, IRC-BPVPS and others that VCR's potential for personalisation of media consumption combined with its uncontrolled, underground existence gradually strengthened its links with other criminal and immoral acts. This 'criminalisation' of VCR, to some extent, was based on its potential criminalism which was aggrandised with 'negative propaganda.' As discussed earlier, VCR was a device usually found in 'pleasure houses.' The MCIG charged that the illegal organisations involved in the distribution of video sets and cassettes were also committing other crimes to maintain their huge interests (MCIG, 1990). Also, according to the IRC, as the time went by and the *Video Men* from lower classes became well established in the neighbourhoods and had developed relations with their rich customers as well as the agents of the 'underground world', they took on the task of distributing other illegal goods. The mutual trust between them and their 'accomplices' (including both customers and suppliers) transformed many of them into providers of drugs, alcohol, gambling devices, prostitutes and so on (IRC-BPVPS, 1990 in MCIG, 1990). More directly, speculation on the supposedly crucial role of *mostahjan* (pornographic) material in the incidents of severe crime (such as murder, extramarital affairs, and child abuse) was frequent (e.g., *Ibid.*; *Ghardoon*, no. 29-30, August-September 1993) and formed the catch-phrase for the anti-VCR (in this sense anti-pornography) campaign for the government and the mass media.

The underground network profited immensely and grew into the second most powerful and important smuggling business in the country, after drugs trafficking! (IRC-BPVPS, 1990 in MCIG, 1990). This network was also involved in smuggling and distribution of other illegal goods. Interestingly enough, it had gained such a financial and

organisational power that it was able to move into other areas of money-making activities (for example, as was proven later, smuggling of satellite receivers). The IRC and MCIG believed that these networks, although they had some ignorant and profiteering elements, were mainly created by agents of foreign or internal 'satanic powers' who were consciously involved in a political campaign against the state (Ibid.; MCIG-CD, November 1984).

During this period, VCR gained increasing significance and the 'VCR phenomenon' was accordingly transformed into a main cultural-political issue. The policy, from the outset, was not clear as far as the permitted and non-permitted material for private uses was concerned. The government lacked a centralised system of cultural policy-making (Fahimi-far, 1 July 1992). The prohibition was not implemented by the government organisations as a co-ordinated, consistent, clear, or a whole-hearted policy, though as Ganley & Ganley (1987) suggest, the penalties for possession and selling of particular video-cassettes included death sentences. Naficy (1987) reports from observers that the "government tolerates the video-cassette black market for the [...] high public demand coupled with its inability or unwillingness to meet those demands" (Naficy, 1987: 462). This observation was also made by Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi who argue that all cultural policies (including illegal VCR consumption) have followed a "policy of pushes and pulls" to discover the optimum point between, on the one hand, the government's determination for the Islamicisation and toleration for dissent and, on the other hand, the public reactions (1991).

However, the fact that the prohibition policy was not adopted by *Majlis* or other national policy-makers, combined with VCR's high penetration in the society, gradually created serious questions for the state. The political factions within the state approached the question of VCR differently and advocated policies that seemed inharmonious. The radical politicians in control of the MCIG and other revolutionary institutions (particularly IRC and IRG) backed more direct policies. According to the MCIG's 1990 report "the police forces and judicial authorities did not pay enough attention toward the exact implementation of the policy" (MCIG, 1990: 7). This alleged indecisiveness was, at least partially, a result of the fact that the prohibition policy was not adopted by the *Majlis*, the highest legislative body in the country, but by the MCIG which could formally legislate the functioning of video-clubs. Therefore, as some have argued (e.g., Fahimi-far,

1 July 1992), the state as an entity did not adopt a comprehensive policy toward video and so passively reacted against further penetration of VCRs and the development of non-permitted material in the society. This fact was combined from the beginning with the appreciation of VCR's acceptable utilisation even by the public for education and entertainment. Yet, the implementation policies varied from time to time and place to place. For instance, the relaxation of late 1983 and the subsequent abundance of new music videos resulted in the growth of 'Punkism' among the rich youth of North Tehran during 1984-85 (see e.g., *Variety*, 19 February 1986). This was immediately followed by strict reactions by the press, MCIG and IRC. But, by the late 1980s the frequency and severity of controls on similar music shows had decreased.

As for the distinction between the *mobtazal* and *mostahjan* material it could be said that the second category was absolutely intolerable by the authorities. Apparently, the pornographic material contradicts all the ideological, cultural, political, moral tenets of the Islamic Republic. It was also widely claimed that several types of new 'how-to' obscene movies are particularly dangerous. These materials were allegedly produced with the help of expert sociologists and psychologists and teach the viewers how to seduce married women and the procedures of gang rapes (e.g., IRC-BPVPS, 1990). However, by the late 1980s there were evidences of domestic productions of *mostahjan* material too. In this regard, MCIG's 1990 report reads that "unfortunately during the past few years some girls and women have been seduced and pushed to play roles in domestic *mostahjan* films. These films have been distributed and it is worrisome that if they find their way out of the country, this will endanger Iran's political and cultural reputation abroad" (p. 4).

Here, it must be noted that during the period of its prohibition, VCR was intensively used by government departments and public institutions including mass media and educational organisations. From the outset, 'proper' uses of VCR by people and public organisations for education and entertainment was sanctioned and exempted from prohibition. To give only one interesting example, one may refer to VCRs' applications in the war fronts. Military forces in the training camps and war fronts extensively utilised VCRs as a cheap, convenient, and mobile medium of entertainment and education. One observer even suggests that most of the youth, especially from rural backgrounds, became acquainted with VCR and its functions at the war front (Fazeli, 1993).

Conclusion

During the 1980s, a very intensified 'video discourse' was developed in Iran by certain state organisations, the mass media and some sectors of the public. According to this discourse, VCR was the central factor of the broad Western (American) conspiracy against the sacred religious political and cultural rhetoric and plans of the Islamic Republic. VCR was the technology that facilitated, accompanied, accomplished, and aggravated all satanic, impure, and animalistic desires and the relevant criminal acts. According to this discourse, VCR, though itself a neutral technology, had profound and far-reaching cultural and political implications in Iran. It was produced by the international enemies to destroy Iran's divine plans to gain cultural and political independence. Such an independence would result in a religious, moral, and sacred order in the society -an order different from those based on the capitalist or communist worldly ideologies. The antagonism between the religious state and the VCR content lay partially in the fact that VCR is a home- and family-based medium and affects family ties and values, while family is considered the nucleus of Islamic social order.

In Iran the state considered the vast majority of available programmes dangerous for the children and adolescents, the generation of the Revolution, who were undergoing an intense Islamic education and socialisation through the school curriculum and formal mass media. Therefore, this generation was caught in between two contradicting cultural and ideological environments, finally possibly developing a dual personality and double behavioural standards. The state also claimed that VCR functions as an alternative to the controlled formal mass media and so helped to create two separate and uncompromising symbolic structures, cultural and moral environments, and two cognitive and behavioural spheres. According to the dominant discourse, the distance between these two spheres was that of between God and Satan, between the sacred and the cursed, between the divine light and the devil darkness.

It was suggested that the 1983 prohibition policy deprived the society of any possible control mechanisms on current content and this multiplied the VCRs' decentralising feature. In this context, the general audience was mobilised in order to overcome the perceived dangers of viewing morally and culturally offensive material. Families adopted several policies to safeguard their children and youngsters from the

negative effects of pornographic, violent, and 'delinquent' material. It seems possible to suggest the following as factors which helped the development and internalisation of spontaneous personal and familial control methods: the illegality and irreligiosity of the *mobtazal* and *mostahjan* material; domination of the negativistic discourse against the 'video nasties'; the indigenous cultural values and ethics and its sensitivity toward sex and gender-related issues; and the circulation of 'rumours' connecting crimes and delinquency to particular content genres.

Resistance against VCRs is not limited to Iran. In particular, the ubiquitous and easy availability of pornographic material (and so-called 'video panic' against the 'video nasties') has generated resentment in many countries around the world. Occasionally, media productions of one country created political or cultural problems in others. For example American programmes in ex-USSR, or Indian movies in Pakistan (see Chapter 2). But, Iran's reaction against video content was unique in many ways. It seems that in Iran every content was somehow, to some extent, unacceptable and punishable (Ganley & Ganley, 1987). For instance, Gubern (1985) suggests that VCR globally has, at least, participated in hedonisation and Americanisation of different cultures and in the creation of so-called "HOMO OTIOSUS", Leisure Man! But again in Iran, politically empowered cultural and religious demands of the state, backed by large sections of the population, for an orthodox and strict life-style was nothing less than the exact opposite of what video had to offer.

Chapter V

VCRs in the Second Republic: 1989-1995

VCRs Legalised

VCRs underground life in Iran proved to be a lasting one. It was mainly for the continuation of the 'Imposed War' that, along with other factors, had caused the persistence of the Thermidor of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. However, by the late 1980s some events are believed to have facilitated Iran's move towards a new phase in its history of the post-revolution; i.e., the *Second Republic*.⁷² These events included the end of the long Iran-Iraq war on 18 June 1988; changes in some important articles of the Constitution of 1979 in 1989; the passing away of Imam Khomeini on 3 June 1989; and "the role and significance of the faces and individuals which came to occupy the highest echelon of power" (Ehteshami, 1995: 30).

The Second Republic

By the mid-1980s many scholars, for instance Bashiriyeh (1984), had suggested that the Thermidor of the Revolution, that is the end of the revolutionary process and the beginning of the definitive establishment of the new regime, had started by 1983-84. But, apparently, this was not completed until the last years of the decade. Ehteshami (1995) argues, among many others,⁷³ that the events mentioned above in a relatively short period -from June 1988 to July 1989- brought about a new era in Iran. The following pace of far-reaching reforms "should be seen in the context of the Thermidor of the Iranian revolution" (p. xiiv). He also points out that the Thermidor has been the

⁷² The terms First Republic and Second Republic were first applied on Iranian history by Ehteshami (1995) to differentiate between the history of the Islamic Republic before and after 1988-89 changes. These terms were accepted immediately and since then have been widely used by others. For example, see: Hashim (1995).

⁷³ See also Abrahamian (1993); Mozaffari (1993); Ramazani (1989).

most revolutionary change that could have affected the Islamic Republic. The subsequent changes in the state policies are believed to have created the Second Republic: “a ‘new’ republic whose *modus operandi* can be said to be different from that of the original, First Republic” (Ibid.: xiv).

Iran’s acceptance of United Nations’ Security Council Resolution 598 on 18 June 1988 brought a cease-fire in the war with Iraq. The abolition of war emergency situation, combined with the devastating economic crisis, accelerated a campaign of criticism of the past state policies in all aspects of life, encompassing economy, domestic and foreign politics -and even culture. The period of open self-criticism had started from early June and by the acceptance of the cease-fire in July it was intensified. The critics were mainly, but not exclusively, from the so-called realist or pragmatist faction of the power elite who targeted all policies of the war period, 1982-88. The state gradually put in its agenda, necessary policy changes and the content, nature and form of the future policies (Ehteshemai, 1995). Many scholars defined the emerging policies as widely ‘realistic and pragmatist’, in contrast with the idealist policies of the First Republic. For instance, Ramazani (1989) argued that by the acceptance of the cease-fire, Iran’s foreign policy began to give way to the realists’ orientations while between July 1982 and July 1988 it was often dominated by the idealists’ revolutionary aspirations. Moreover, as Amirahmadi (1988) believes, the “gradual shift of the Islamic state from its initial ideological commitments to a more *pragmatic* policies” had been evident by the mid-1980s (Amirahmadi, 1988: 2, emphasis added).

The passing away of Imam Khomeini, the uncompromising and unchallenged religious and political Leader, and the resignation of Ayatollah Montazeri as Faqih-designate necessitated subsequent changes of higher power figures. The constitutional reforms “removed the position of Faqih as the most powerful single authority in the land and institutionalised the mechanisms of power and its formal distribution” (Ehteshami, 1995: 37). The new Constitution abolished the office of the Prime Minister and so improved the position of the President as the powerful head of the executive. The reformed Constitution of 1989 devised two key institutions of the Leader and the executive President as the most powerful pillars in control of the country’s politico-religious and governmental machinery. Subsequently, Hojjatoleslams Khamene’i and Hashemi Rafsanjani, respectively the President and the Speaker of the *Majlis*, were

elected as the new spiritual Leader and the new executive President in June 1989. By this, a strong Leader-President alliance was created (Ibid.).

Iranian politics during the war years was dominated by two factions of political groups and individuals; namely 'radicals' and 'moderates or pragmatists' (see, e.g., Akhavi, 1987). These two broad factions advocated different socio-economic and cultural policies. The elections for the third *Majlis* in 1988 widened the policy gaps between them and the 'moderates' gained power in the *Majlis*, though the radicals remained a considerable core of radical deputies (Ehteshami, 1995; and Siavoshi, 1992).

By late 1989 there seemed to appear a new coherence among the key power centres of the Second Republic -the Leader, the President, and the *Majlis*. This harmony was based on a recognition of the necessity of new reconstructionist and reformist policies. The new President announced the policies of the new Republic. The new Cabinet, nicknamed the "Cabinet of Construction," consisted mainly of technocrat Ministers. In August 1989, the Cabinet received an unprecedented vote of confidence from the third *Majlis*. The third *Majlis*, the legacy of the First Republic, also gave a considerable support to the executive power in its new economic, social, and foreign policies (Ehteshami, 1995).

The policies, as Ehteshami (1995) believes, indicated three identifiable areas of policy change: domestic politics; economic and social policy; and foreign policy. But, he also adds that somehow since the beginning "[n]ot all of these have been pursued with the same vigour by the new administration. Of the three areas, the main focus has been on economic and foreign policy" (p. 42). The Second Republic in its foreign policy moved to improve its regional and international standing through developing dialogue with the Western, Eastern as well as Persian Gulf Arab states. These changes in Iran's foreign policy were motivated by the requirements of the economic reconstruction and the severe repercussions of its diplomatic isolation.

The domestic economy was in a deteriorating state due to the war and, hence, "[t]he need for economic reform and policy change was the dominant theme of the Rafsanjani presidency. [...] The new government's strategy was based on raising industrial production and accelerating economic growth. The control of inflation and a reduction in the government's budget deficit were regarded as major priorities of the

Rafsanjani administration, but so too were the raising of foreign finance for reconstruction and economic development, the raising of tax receipts by the government, deregulation, liberalisation, and privatisation of the economy. The heart of the new economic policies was to be found in the Five Year Development Plan, formulated in 1989 and scheduled to start in 1990” (p. 42).

However, it should be noted that the Second Republic (since 1989) has revealed a considerable degree of continuation of the First Republic (1982-88). The major difference is to be found in the state policies, with the economic policies being the most important. Yet, even the economic policies show a remarkable degree of continuity since, according to Ehteshami (1995), the policy change has not been dramatic and the new policies have been implemented cautiously. There are other elements of continuity too. The bureaucratic structures and the clerical authority and control over the levers of power of the Second Republic are believed to have remained to a remarkable degree as that of the First Republic. Also, the Salman Rushdie affair that started in the spring of 1989 “was seen as a sign which marked the ascendancy of the radical elements within the Islamic Republic” (p. 46).

Changes of Media Environment and Cultural Policies

The state policy changes, following the events that started with the acceptance of the cease-fire in the war with Iraq, included cultural sphere as well. The cease-fire ended the war effort that was considered a national issue and removed the war emergency condition in the country that had required the participation of the public and the mass media. During the war years and under the name of war effort, mass media had been under control and were dominantly involved in war propaganda. The state from the summer of 1988 adopted an initially marginal relaxation policy in cultural and media policies, probably in recognition of the immense psychological and economic pressures of the war years (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991).

The emerging cultural policies were unclear. However, there was a general trend toward open criticism and a more relaxed cultural atmosphere, while there were other signs of persistence, or even acceleration, of the Islamicisation policies of the past decade. Imam Khomeini in the one year period between the end of the Iran-Iraq war and

his demise issued several *fatwas* (i.e., religious verdicts). These *fatwas* resulted in the lifting of the official ban on, for instance, musical instruments and the playing of chess. These verdicts were regarded by Hashemi Rafsanjani, then the Speaker of *Majlis*, as “great steps for progressive Islam against the more traditional clerics” (*Resalat*, 24 December 1988 in Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991: 50).

Prior to 1988-89 period, the official culture had already shown its readiness for compromise and tolerance on many issues, albeit in varying degrees. Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991) argue that the vacillation of the official culture had been, among other reasons, because of the difficulties faced for the production of enough domestic cultural material; the high costs of imported hardware and material; and the very deep “internationalisation” of Iranian culture -in particular, that of a large sector of the upper and upper-middle classes of urban population. These difficulties, however, remained, if not to say advanced, after the cease-fire in 1988. Moreover, the new atmosphere of national (mainly, but not exclusively, economic) reconstruction policies after the end of the necessitated national reconciliation as well. This, apparently, required changes in the, albeit *de facto*, state attitudes not only toward domestic politics but also its policies in the cultural/media domain. With the abolition of military threat and relative stability of the Islamic state, a ‘re-definition’ or ‘evolution’ of Islamic media policy seemed inevitable. This started with criticism of the past policies and gradually became a critical issue for the state and the public as the realities of the late 1980s surfaced. After several years of confrontation with VCRs and other ‘uncontrollable’ communications media under the First Republic, the Second Republic became slowly aware of the VCRs’ growing penetration rate and also the possibility of direct foreign broadcasting through satellites and other developing global media.

It seems reasonable to suggest that Iran since 1988-89 has faced the repercussions of the globalisation of media, one of the main features of the “post-modern” era. As a result of its increasing awareness of, and confrontation with, the rapid and high penetration of new media technologies, the state has been forced to change the policies of the First Republic. Although it has maintained its ideological adherence, the Iranian state has adopted new media policies mainly in reaction to the ‘dangers’ which stem from the unprecedented penetration of ‘alien’ cultural and media content. In this context, the public and internal media organisations have stepped up the pressure for a developed

and diverse media environment. The main media related processes during the Second Republic and the subsequent state policy changes could be identified as a few interrelated issues. These have functioned as a cycle of causes and effects. This chain of events had started earlier with the penetration of video sets and cassettes in the country but had been ignored and passively confronted. The new cultural atmosphere witnessed a phenomenal increase in the circulation of uncontrolled *imports* of foreign content that required an active *recognition* of the implications of the new communications technologies. This, also, brought about increases in the public and professional concern with, and *criticism* of, the 'media policies' of the past decade. This also increased public and professional demands for the qualitative and quantitative *development* of national media. This, in turn, brought about an increasing *internationalisation* of media content. It should be said that these trends had their origins in the previous years and were only accelerated during this period.

Criticism of Media Policies

As suggested earlier, Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire in July 1988 intensified, and more importantly publicised, an on-going process of evaluation of all state policies. The new campaign of open self-criticism included an intensified cultural/media criticism, along the aforementioned economic, foreign, and domestic policies. The critical evaluation of the existing cultural/media policies had started even before the July cease-fire. For instance, *Soroush*, the official weekly journal of VVIR, had complained of the lack of entertainment-oriented programmes on radio and television. The article urged the administrators to think about the media in an appropriate and positive way otherwise, it warned that, the 'counter-culture' of the *Taghut* and West (that is, the culture of consumerism, drug addiction, corruption and alike) will return and expand (*Soroush*, no. 431: 3-5, 11 June 1988).

Criticism of the efficiency of cultural policies of the state was developed or facilitated by very important governmental departments. Mousavi-Gharmaroodi, a poet and relatively respected literary figure, in an article published in *Siasat-e Khareji*, the journal of Foreign Ministry's Institute of Research on International Relations, highlighted the negative effects of the anti-nationalist campaign of the Islamic state on

Iran's international prestige and also on the efficiency of the state policies inside the country (Mousavi-Gharmaroodi, September 1988).

The 'cultural dynamism' was widened with the cease-fire and other events which occurred during the following year or so. During this period, media professionals and organisations called for a 'new' criteria for media content. The search was carried out in a gradual manner and the limits were determined by trials and the evaluation of 'errors' - i.e., the toleration limits of the clerical politicians and traditional sectors of the population. This process, somehow inevitably, resulted in the occurrence of a number of incidents that, as Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994) have observed, proved that controversy about the programming was let out of the confines of media organisations and was dealt with in the public.

Many officials of the VVIR immediately after July 1988 criticised the existing position and policies of the media and called for changes. Mohammad Hashemi, the Director-General of VVIR, in an interview announced that criticism is the mission of the mass media system. He expressed that VVIR was responsible to reflect the real needs of the nation and engage in reviewing the problems and honest evaluation of the government performance and policies. He also complained of many government officials' inability to tolerate criticism aired by the radio and television while, he insisted that, criticism was the mission of the media according to the governing principles assigned by the *Majlis* (Soroush, no. 451, 5 November 1988). Gradually, specific broadcasting policies were also criticised by relevant authorities. For instance, Hemmati, Deputy-Director for Political Affairs and the Chief of the News Unit of VVIR, criticised the propagandistic nature of Iranian news coverage. He insisted on the ideological and political importance of news programmes on the broadcasting media. He also compared the Iranian and Western media policies and implied that the huge amount of news on Iranian radio and television, carrying a just and Islamic message, lacks subtlety, attractiveness and, hence, persuasiveness because of the use of direct methods of propaganda. The Western media, on the other hand, possess these qualities in their service to the imperialistic aims of the foreign powers (Soroush, no. 462, 21 January 1989).

Media Development

Immediately following the cease-fire in the summer of 1988 signs of relaxation in the mass media appeared. Television programmes showed a slow move toward a diverse broadcasting schedule. For instance, as Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1991) point out, there was coverage of foreign women athletes competing in the Seoul Olympic games. These authors, comparing the program titles of the two television channels before and after the cease-fire, detected a drastic decline in the amount of religious programming. The increased categories included general-interest light entertainment content such as (an increased amount of imported) feature films and 'music' as well as more serious discussion programmes. These trends continued in the following years. But the development of different media after 1988 did not occur simultaneously. Here the development of radio-television, cinema and press are discussed briefly.

Radio & Television: The state-controlled radio and television at least until 1993-4 lagged behind the private or semi-private press and cinema institutions. According to the information provided in the annual reports of VVIR, the total amount of programmes aired on Channel One of the Iranian television, increased from 2547 hours in 1368 (1989/90) to 2949 hours for the following year, on average more than 8 hours per day (a 16% increase). This figure is reported to have been 3043 hours during 1370 (1991/92). The development reflects partially the increase in entertainment-oriented programmes (films, theatre, music and sports); 27% of 13578 hours of all programmes on two national and several provincial television channels in 1370. But this category was still far less than informational (i.e., news and commentaries) and educational (i.e., developmental, cultural, and religious) content, respectively 33.5% and 35.3% (VVIR, 1992).

Cinema: The revival of Iranian cinema started after the turbulent year of 1982. In Iran during and after the Revolution until 1983, only between 7 and 17 feature films were produced per annum. Iranian film industry from early 1983 entered a new stage. This followed new policies of the newly appointed administration of Hojjatoleslam Dr. Khatami, the Minister of C&IG. These policies included government financial support and prohibition of VCRs (on this and other policies see previous chapter). The cinema

policy, officially defined as “Support, Supervision, Guidance”⁷⁴, increased productions to reach 21-25, 29, and 23-50 movies during the three years of 1983-85 (Naficy, 1987). Under the Islamic criteria and in the absence of attractive elements (such as sex, music and dance), Iranian movie producers from 1983 sought for alternative attractions in subject, decoration, acting, location, and audio-visual special effects which were gradually developed with more experience (Gholmakani, 7 May 1992). With the increasing penetration of VCRs and the possible development of direct broadcasting satellites, Iranian cinema toward the end of 1980s and early 1990s was pressurised to develop quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

Iranian films also achieved an unprecedented success abroad as they more frequently participated in international film festivals and won prizes. During the first decade after the Revolution of 1979, Iranian cinematic productions only had 23 to 49 annual presence in the international festivals and had received a maximum of 6 prizes. But in the 5-year period of 1989-1993, these figures increased rapidly to 88, 377, 291, 279, 415 participations⁷⁵ and 17, 19, 22, 22, 26⁷⁶ awarded prizes (*Film*, no. 154, February 1994: 192-195). This coincided with the increasing sale of Iranian cinematic productions in other countries. In a six year period from 1989 until March 94 respectively 6, 22, 15, 21, 21, and 30 cinematic productions⁷⁷ managed 10, 41, 20, 31, 26, and 43 copy-right contracts worth several hundred thousand US dollars (*Sanat-e Tasvir*, no. 6, July 1994: 18-20).⁷⁸ Also, the annual number of translated and authored book titles in the field of cinema published in Iran increased from 12 in 1981 to 41 in 1992 (*Sanat-e Tasvir*, no. 5, June 1994: 33-34).

Press: The most noticeable and immediate improvement in Iranian media was achieved by the press as the number of private and semi-private newspapers and journals increased. The press have had a remarkable position in the Iranian society and has increased during the Second Republic. As Mohammadi (30 April 1996) notes, this is because the press, unlike other mass media in Iran, carry analytic information and are

⁷⁴ “Hemayat, Nezarat, Hedayat” in Persian.

⁷⁵ These figures include also films shown in Iranian film festivals abroad and so do not reflect merely the number of films participating in the competition sections of the international film festivals.

⁷⁶ This figure increased to 33 during the last month of Iranian year (1372) after the publication of the report by *Film* magazine in February (*Sanat-e Tasvir*, op.cit.)

⁷⁷ The productions include mainly feature films as well as short films, animations, and documentaries.

⁷⁸ For more statistics on the country origins of international festivals, awarded films and directors, types of copy-rights and purchaser countries, and alike consult the two references mentioned above.

numerous and competitive. This is also because almost all cultural, professional, ethnic, linguistic, and gender groups as well as political factions and non-governmental organisations have relatively easy access to the print media, through their own publications. The total number of publications was lowered dramatically during the First Republic. The total number of publication titles, estimated to be over 500 after February 1979 (Shahidi, June 1996), during the turbulent years of 1980-82 was decreased dramatically. This trend continued for the following two years and amounted to respectively 97 and 89 in 1363 (March 1984-March 1985) and 1364 (March 1985-March 1986). The gradual increase of publication titles started at 99 titles in 1365 (March 1986-March 1987) and reached 121 in the following year (Mohammadi, 30 April 1996).

From 1984 the government had already increased the number of publication licenses issued. But until 1988 it remained less than a dozen per annum. The acceptance of the cease-fire immediately effected the total number of publication licenses issued and, more importantly, available titles. The increase in the number of publication licenses rose by 1300% in a three year period: from 11 in 1367 (1988/89) to 139 in 1369 (1990/91). The number of licenses can not show the exact number of publication titles because only about two-thirds of the 455 applicants who had obtained a license between 1979 and 1991 were able to launch their publications. However, the annual number of publication titles witnessed an instant increase after the 1988 cease-fire: 193, 176, and 344 respectively for the three subsequent years between 1367-1369 (1988/89, 1989/90, and 1990/91). This increase continued during the next years, reaching a remarkable total of - according to informal statistics- 611 publications in 1372 (1993/94): 32 dailies, 105 weeklies, 331 monthlies, 25 bi-monthlies, 118 quarterlies (Mohammadi, 30 April 1996). Shahidi (June 1996) also reported a record figure of 811 publications in 1374 (1995/96): 28 dailies, and approximately 150 weeklies, 300 monthlies, and 250 quarterlies.

This increase in the quantity of available publications has fostered some crucial changes in the print media organisation that have added to its importance in Iranian society. In this regard several issues should be noted. First, possibly for the first time in Iranian history, the total number of private or semi-private (that is affiliated to non-governmental organisations) publications has surpassed those directly owned and controlled by the government. The total number of publications owned and run privately

or semi-privately increased from around a half of all publications in 1989 to two-thirds in 1993. In 1993, out of 400 publications, 241 were private and 34 were owned and run by non-governmental public organisations, compared to 115 owned and directly controlled by the government (Mohammadi, 1 May 1996). Second, the geographical distribution of publications has been effected. In 1373 (1993/94) out of 400 publications 87 were being published in other cities other than Tehran (Office for Domestic Press, 1994). Third, this change has expanded publications of national minorities in their ethnic languages (Turkish, Kurdish, and Armenian) or bi-lingually; in Persian and one of these ethnic languages (Ibid.). Fourth, the number of publications in foreign languages has increased as well. This category includes bi-lingual publications that are printed in Persian and one or two foreign languages. In 1993, 46 publications were in this category, 9 in English, & in Arabic, 23 in English and Persian, and the rest in a combination of Persian and one or two of Arabic, French, and German (Ibid.).

Fifth, the aftermath of 1988 has witnessed a relative 'diversification' as far as the alternative political and cultural views are concerned. Many daily newspapers and periodicals, established in the past years are somehow affiliated either to independent cultural groups or to political factions of power elite (see e.g., Siavoshi, 1992; and Ehteshami, 1995). These publications express critical approaches to existing state policies and promote alternative policies in various spheres, including that of culture and mass media. The so-called 'liberalist' cultural groups -mainly composed of literary figures, novelists, poets and alike- own and control many weekly and monthly publications that carry analytic or critical articles. For instance, *Adineh*, *Donya-ye Sokhan* (both founded in 1985), *Kelk*, *Gardoona*, *Takapoo*, and *Gozareh*, closely examine cultural issues and have published many critical articles (see, e.g., Shahidi, June 1996). The governmental departments too have established new publications that focus mainly on culture and mass media like *Nameh-ye Farhang* (Letter of Culture) and *Rasaneh* (Media), the newly established quarterlies of the MCIG. Currently, the number of these 'cultural' publications, combined with other private or governmental new or older ones that specialise mainly in cinema, television and theatre, amount to several dozens (Mohammadi, 1 May 1996).

With increasing factionalism among the power elite since 1988, the existing political factions have tried to obtain their loyal media. The subsequent factional

affiliation of the media is more evident in the print media -in particular in daily newspapers. The political factions have attracted the loyalty of existing publications and have founded their own daily newspapers as well as periodicals. Clear examples of these are the loyalty of *Kayhan* and *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* to the conservatives and the political affiliation of new national dailies such as *Resalat*, *Hamshahri*, and *Salam* established by the conservatives, pragmatists, and radicals respectively.⁷⁹

Internationalisation of Media Content

The increasing diversification of the content of broadcasting, print and cinema has inevitably resulted in the ‘internationalisation’ of media content. The internationalisation of media content includes the increasing use of imports as well as more coverage of foreign issues in domestic productions. The international eclecticism of domestic productions is obvious even in the publications of state-controlled cultural/media organisations, e.g., *Soroush*, the weekly journal of VVIR and *Nameye Farhang* (Letter of Culture) and *Rasaneh* (Media), the newly established quarterlies of the MCIG (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991).

In the following years the number of foreign feature films on television and at cinemas gradually increased. Even the import of new American films for cinemas started in the first half of 1371 (spring and summer 1992) with the screening of *Dances with Wolves* (1990). At the same time, there were rumours about the purchase and dubbing of other American movies including *Ghost* (1990) and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) (*Film*, no. 129, September 1992).

The Limits of Development

However, the shifts in Iranian cultural and media policies described above did not proceed so far as to be categorised ‘cultural liberalism’. As suggested earlier, according to many scholars (for instance, Ehteshami, 1995) the Second Republic shows a considerable degree of continuation of the First Republic. The new republic, as Hunter suggests, has accepted and legitimised “the concept of Iran and Iranianism as a coequal

⁷⁹ On this see Ehteshami (1995), Siavoshi (1992), and Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi (1994), among others.

focus with Islam of loyalty and a component of Iranian cultural identity” (Hunter, 1992). Nevertheless, the role of Islamic ideology as the driving force behind state policies has remained crucial, though differing interpretations of Islamic values and evaluations of ‘traditional life-styles’ have been expressed by the political factions. However, the state has maintained its adherence to the Islamic values in cultural/media realm. In general, culture has been one of the most significant issues for the Islamic Republic that considers itself primarily as a cultural/religious movement against the ‘global arrogance’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994).

Several issues of cultural/media domain have remained controversial in the 1990s. These issues are, for example, those related to dress code (particularly of women), types of entertainment, and modes of artistic expression such as music and films. Since 1988-89, they have created controversy between various factions of the power elite. In general, many scholars have argued that, during 1988-92, a new arrangement of political factions has emerged in Iran from the previous radical and moderate groups. Siavoshi (1992), for instance, argues that the elections for the fourth *Majlis* in 1992 revealed the deep-rooted differences between the various gradations within the dominant moderate faction. She then suggests that the Iranian political scene is composed of three political groups; radical, reformist or pragmatist, and conservative factions -or respectively, left, centre, and right. These groups advocate differing political, economic, and cultural policies.

Here a brief examination of the cultural views of these three factions can help us understand the cultural/media (including the VCR-related) policies of the Second Republic. The radicals, who largely controlled the state prior to 1988, while defending a leftist-statist socio-economic policy, advocate a ‘relatively liberal’ cultural policy. This view, expressed in the daily newspapers *Abrar* and *Salam*, “advocates a less strict code of censorship for films and a more or less progressive attitude towards proliferation of different art forms” (Siavoshi, 1992: 39). The radicals also “welcome conditional cultural and artistic exchanges with the West” and defend education and domestic productions “to create a strong and viable Islamic intellectual atmosphere which tolerates oppositional views” (Ibid.). But, the radicals were increasingly marginalised from the power structure and, hence, the Second Republic, at least during the first years, was dominated by the alliance of pragmatists and conservatives. The alliance has

gradually proved to be fragile when it comes to cultural issues (see, e.g., Sarabi, 1994). This is because in the cultural/media domain the pragmatists, possibly based on an utilitarian view, advocate a view similar to that of radicals while in economic policies side with the conservatives. The conservative position in its cultural policies “is based on a highly restrictive, puritanical interpretation of Islamic precepts” (Siavoshi, 1992: 40). This view, expressed in the daily newspapers *Resalat*, *Kayhan*, and *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, “advocates a strict dress code, particularly for women, and calls for heavy-handed censorship of artistic expression” (Ibid.).

During the last years of the 1980s and the early years of 1990s, the cultural controversies among the political factions intensified. This was, partially, because of the higher penetration of VCRs and introduction of foreign television channels through satellites which brought to attention the question of “Western cultural aggression” or the “cultural invasion” of the country by ‘enemy’ Western media productions. This widened the differences between the political factions since each advocated incompatible policies for the development of the indigenous culture. They also advocated differing methods of resistance against the domineering foreign cultures. In particular, the cultural/media debates of the summer of 1992 “became the most heated area in the power struggle between the conservative and liberal forces” (Siavoshi, 1992: 40). Until then, the most important cultural institutions of the country were controlled by the radicals or the reformists who pursued similar policies; the Ministry of culture and Islamic guidance (MCIG) was under the control of Hojjatoleslam Dr. Khatami, a radical, and the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic (VVIR) was supervised by Mohammad Hashemi, a reformist.

This period coincided with the elections for the fourth *Majlis*. The radicals, who had a majority of 150 deputies out of 270 seats in the previous *Majlis*, were unable to regain their prominent position in the fourth *Majlis*. The radicals got only around 40 seats and, therefore, they lost their last formal representation in the state apparatus (see Ehteshami, 1995; Sarabi, 1994; Siavoshi, 1992). In the fourth *Majlis* the alliance of reformists and conservatives attained the majority and, so, all three state branches fell under their control. However, the disputes on cultural policies between the two dominant factions brought about several changes in the higher echelon of administrators and policy-makers.

The relatively open and tolerant policies of the radical and reformist administrators of the MCIG and VVIR were attacked by the conservatives, particularly after the convening of the conservative fourth *Majlis* (see, e.g., Siavoshi, 1992). The *Kayhan* and other dailies affiliated to the conservatives, *Resalat* and *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, attacked Dr. Khatami's approach and demanded a harsh censorship for films, publications, and other artistic expressions. On the other hand, radical dailies (*Salam* and *Abrar*) as well as pragmatist-affiliated publications (e.g., *Hamshahri* and *Ettela'at*) published many articles in defence of the 'relatively liberal' policies of the MCIG and VVIR.⁸⁰ Subsequently, Hojjatoleslam Dr. Khatami resigned as the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance on 17 July 1992 and was replaced by Ali Larijani, a conservative. Also, Mohammad Hashemi was removed on 13 February 1994 and Ali Larijani was appointed as the new Director-General of VVIR (*Soroush*, no. 656, 27 February 1994). During the following years, the conservative policies of the cultural/media organisations, combined with the reformist national economic policies⁸¹, affected the development of the Iranian media in various ways. For instance, the publications were restricted and some were closed (Mohammadi, 1 May 1996). Also, Iranian cinema witnessed a hard economic and policy situation that was considered a crisis (see, e.g., *Film*, no. 142, June 1993).

The print media during 1989-1993 enjoyed relative freedom between 1989-92, compared to the war years, and criticised many government policies and performances including those related to culture and mass media. They increasingly critically approached the prohibition of VCRs, the regulations regarding import of foreign programmes, the management of broadcasting media and cinema and the required standards for their programmes and movies. These reactions, combined with other changes in media organisations and political structures resulted in the 'legalisation' of video-clubs in 1993. The following section examines in detail the position of VCRs in the Second Republic and the changes in the VCR-related state policies.

⁸⁰ On these debates see the various articles and particularly editorials of these daily newspapers between May-July 1992. For instance, see editorials of *Kayhan* on 18, 21, 23 July.

⁸¹ For instance, a severe reduction of direct and indirect subsidies paid to the private publications and movie producers from early 1372 (1993/94).

VCR: The Cultural Issue

Still a Forgotten Issue: 1988-89

The general changes in Iranian society from 1988 onwards and the following shifts in the political figures and state policies did not immediately change the video-clubs' illegal position or VCRs' underground life. In 1983 and during the following years several reasons had been explicitly announced by the state, or were implicitly present, behind the prohibition policy. But, by 1988-89 a few of these conditions had changed. The experience of previous years had proved that the political oppositions and guerrilla groups had been relatively unable to use VCRs to disseminate their ideologies and, therefore, bring mass mobilisation against the Islamic republic. The prohibition policy had failed to stop or limit the VCRs' economic expenses. It had failed to stop or limit the importation of video sets and cassettes and the development of a financially powerful network of smugglers and rentals. The failure of the 1983 prohibition was also due to the fact that the underground networks had provided hundreds of thousands of relatively cheap new VCRs. These inevitably had cost hundreds of millions of US dollars for the buyers and, therefore, the state's international reserves. Also, with the existence of numerous underground video-rentals, a huge amount of money was concentrated in the hands of the illegal and uncontrollable networks. The removal of the war emergency condition ended the widespread emotional grief and sorrow and the atmosphere of reconstruction and national reconciliation was in the process of legitimising entertainment. Nevertheless, the persistence of Islam as the state ideology and its politico-cultural appreciation of 'traditional' moral codes still contradicted the dominant functions of VCRs -their utilisation for the consumption of uncontrolled Western-style 'entertaining' content.

The new conditions affected VCRs' existence in a different way. Following the acceptance of the cease-fire the illegal import and distribution of VCRs increased gradually. According to estimates published by Unesco, in 1988 25.2% of Iranian families with a television set owned a VCR. This showed 8.15% increase compared to the previous year (Unesco, 1989). The increase in the VCRs' annual penetration was partially due to the fact that only since late 1368 (early 1990) VHS format was introduced in Iran. These models were supplied abundantly by the underground

networks and sold cheaper compared to previous Betamax sets; a simple player was only 500,000 Rls. and a recorder-replayer between 600-650,000 Rls. at the time (see, e.g., *Film*, no. 159, May 1994). The number of available VCR sets by mid-1992 was estimated between 1.5 to 2 million.⁸² Later that year the estimates had increased. Ali Larijani, the new Minister of Culture & Islamic Guidance, in a report to the *Majlis* admitted to the existence of 2.5m sets in the country (*Kayhan*, 20 December 1992). And only a few months later, early 1373 (March 1994), newer estimates put the figure around 3m sets (see, e.g., *Film*, no. 159, May 1994).

The increasing illegal supply of new VCRs between 1990 and 93 decreased the prices. This was despite a relatively high penetration rate and the continuous devaluation of Rial. The decrease was particularly evident from early 1371 (March 1992). For instance, a VCR priced at 700-900,000 Rls. in 1989-90, was available for 350-450,000 Rls. in early 1992, a decrease of almost 50% (*Abrar*, 3 May 1992). Also, a new service was introduced by the traders to increase the number of sales; 6 and 12 monthly instalments (*Abrar*, 31 May 1992).

However, despite its rapid penetration in Iran after 1988, , VCR was apparently not one of the openly debated issues in the relatively dynamic cultural atmosphere of the country. It seems that the domination of anti-VCR discourse was not contested and a negative image of 'video-culture' prevented the mass media and cultural governmental organisations from any open attention to the issue. The criminalisation of video-sets and cassettes and its internalisation by the policy-makers and at least some sectors of the population did not allow a rapid change in the existing conditions of VCRs in Iran. According to available publication indexes,⁸³ in 1367 (1988/89) and 1368 (1989/90) -the two years during which the Islamic Republic underwent profound transformations- there was only one independent article on VCRs in the press. This one-page article, titled

⁸² The first estimate was given by the Governor of Hamadan Province (*Salam*, 5 August 1992) and the second has appeared in various sources, for instance, see Orouji (May 1992).

⁸³ The main sources for finding the references have been the MCIG's *Majmoo'-e Magalat-e Farhangi dar Nashriyat-e Jomhuri-ye Eslami-e Iran* (Index of Cultural Articles in the Publications of the Islamic Republic of Iran) as well as a newly founded index journal, *Nemayeh*, published monthly since August 1991 and the section "Index of Articles on Media" in *Rasaneh* since its 7th issue in Autumn 1991. It must be noted that these Indexes do not cover all the available publications and their coverage, though this has increased over the years, it has not been comprehensive. For example, *Nemayeh* in its first 18 issues indexed periodicals and only from its 19th issue (May 1993) has included articles published in the daily newspapers.

“Video Swallows Cinema,” appeared in *Ayeneh*, a tabloid-style weekly newspaper (no. 13, 5 March 1990: 6). Even in the following year, 1369 (1990/91), when the cultural/media issues were hot subjects among the mass media and politicians, only one independent article on VCRs appeared in the press -a translation on negative psychological effects of video games (*Javanan-e Emrouz*, no. 1266, 18 March 1991: 24-25).

VCR debated: 1990

Between 1988-91 the VCR-related matters (e.g., the legal position of video sets, clubs, and cassettes as well as domestic video production) were discussed somehow vaguely as part of the wider cultural discussions. Following these critiques the first important steps toward an open discussion on VCR was taken by government organisations during 1369 (1990/91). Several state departments participated in the debates by publication of a few reports.⁸⁴ These contradicting reports showed the differing opinions of the government departments that were controlled by various political factions. These factions advocated different cultural policies, though vaguely in the beginning. These reports can help us understand the contradicting views of the government organisations on a proper national policy on VCRs. In April 1990 there was a rumour about possible legalisation for VCRs. Prior to this a foreign journalist, Mark Thomas, had published an article in a foreign newspaper (14 February 1990) claiming that the *Majlis* is considering the legalisation of video-clubs. This was denied by the Public Relations Office of the *Majlis* (Khosravi *et al.*, May 1993).

Surprisingly, the very first ‘official’ to mention the necessity of a change in the existing VCR policy was Hojjatoleslam Akbar-zadeh, Head of the Islamic Revolutionary Committees’ Bureau for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Sin (IRC-BPVPS)⁸⁵.

⁸⁴ Some of these reports were not found and are quoted from Solh-joo (April 1994). Particularly, two reports are important one by MCIG in 1990 and the other by Islamic Revolutionary Committees’ Bureau for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Sin (IRC-BPVPS) in April 1990 (titles not available). Also, there was another report by the MCIG in 1990 titled “Some Aspects of Negative Cultural Impacts of VCRs”.

⁸⁵ It is useful to note that the IRC, according to its constitution approved by the *Majlis*, was responsible for confronting smuggling and consumption of drugs, smuggling of all illegal goods, counter-revolutionary groups, general crimes as well as *monkarati* (i.e., moral) crimes (on this see IRC, Spring 1989).

He pointed out that the prohibition of video-clubs has destroyed any possible chance for a proper control on the video-cassette market. Hence, he concluded that the state must consider a new policy for the distribution of permitted materials to the VCR owners in order to confront the monopoly of the illegal distributors (*Et'tela'at*, 22 April 1990). This announcement caused immediate reactions. The daily *Abrar* welcomed the plan (27 April 1990), while the MCIG, particularly the Cinema Deputy of the Ministry, attacked the demand for a policy change. The Ministry charged that legalisation of video-clubs will destroy the then gradually flourishing film industry (see, *Resalat*, 3 May 1990). However, despite the vocal opposition of Hojjatoleslam Akbar-zadeh to the prohibition policy, the IRC did not officially give guidelines for the new policy. The IRC was soon amalgamated with the regular police forces and, therefore, its voice as a revolutionary organisation was lost.

As the first official debate, Planning and Budget Organisation (PBO), controlled by the reformist-pragmatist faction, criticised the prohibition policy. The PBO's report,⁸⁶ apparently based on research findings, admitted to the failures of the prohibition policy. It claimed that since the closure of formal video-clubs in 1983, the actual number of video-rentals has in fact increased dramatically. It also claimed that underground networks successfully distribute illegally imported video sets and cassettes in thousands. The report suggested that the experience of the past years confirms that the government can not have an effective and continuous control in the market. The report, then, describes the VCR as a relatively convenient and appropriate entertainment technology for families. It said that VCRs' increasing penetration should be seen as a 'natural' reaction to the existing content of the national media. It charged that television airs boring and repetitive films and cinemas lack the desired 'diversity' and are almost closed to foreign productions. It also points out that "eliminative encounter with VCR is in fact escaping from a phenomenon that will, whatever our desire, continue to develop. So, this kind of encounter actually results in the enlargement of VCR's negative repercussions and in the negligence of important educational, cultural, and scientific utilities of the technology". Finally it concludes that "now when it is impossible to swim against the current, it is logical for the government to guide it toward a healthy direction" (PBO, 1990 in Solh-joo, April 1994).

⁸⁶ This report was not found and here all quotation are from Solh-joo (April 1994).

The publication of this report, along with other articles in the independent journals which advocated legalisation of video-clubs, prompted a strong reaction from the Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance. The MCIG was then controlled by the radicals who advocated resistance against penetration of Western culture and supported the development of domestic cultural/media productions in a relatively free context. The MCIG published a report and charged that video-clubs from the outset were distributing *mostahjan* or at least *mobtazal* cassettes and, hence, their activities were *na-mashrou'* (against the Shari'a) and illegal. The relatively free circulation of the enormous amount of these materials after 1983 was the result of negligence of the criminal systems and the customs office which did not properly implement the prohibition of these illegal materials (MCIG, 1990 in Solh-joo, April 1994). The report also provided a different view on entertainment and leisure from that of the PBO. It argued that VCR provides a kind of entertainment which separates its audience from the formal national media (i.e., television and cinema) while the available content dominating the VCR market is certainly 'counter-cultural', unlike those provided by the Islamic national media.

The MCIG report, advocating different definitions of "audience" and "preference", questioned the PBO's analysis of VCRs' popularity. It claimed that the PBO's analysis is not grounded properly since only a small section of the population acknowledged the supposed lack of 'diversity' in the television and cinema programmes and, hence, their proclaimed low quality and repetitiveness. The report implied that the criteria for the possible legal VCR market which will serve 'a small minority' of the population would not be different from that of the national media which is used by the 'overwhelming majority'. Therefore, regarding the undesirability of any form of "cultural dualism" in the Islamic Republic, the legalisation of VCR is pointless since it will not eliminate the problem of "content diversity" (MCIG, 1990 in Solh-joo, April 1994). The opponents of legal video-clubs also claimed that the media preferences of the 'small minority' who use the dominant VCR material are the same motives behind other kinds of *monkarat* (i.e., sins, particularly sexual indecent acts⁸⁷). Therefore, any 'diversification' of the media content (including that of the possible legal VCR market) to encompass these 'deviant' (*monharef*) preferences can not be acceptable on the bases of the Islamic Shari'a.

⁸⁷ In the criminal terminology of IRC *monkarat* crimes generally refer to sexual crimes such as unlawful heterosexual relations, homosexuality, and rape.

The opponents of legal video-clubs admitted that VCR is a technology with a wide range of positive and negative potentials. But, they believed that its 'destructive' implications have prevailed. According to MCIG's report, "VCR, though itself a neutral technological improvement, has become a technology with enormous negative cultural and political powers. It pursues its mission to empty the cultural identity of the Islamic society and, therefore, the government must forcefully resist it even if this is called backwardness and a reactionary policy" (MCIG, 1990 in Solh-joo, April 1994). According to this view, legalisation of video-clubs on the bases of providing the necessary diversified content was a 'cultural deceit'. They said that the Islamic criteria for media content will not be respected in the legalised VCR market since every non-permitted material will circulate under the name of permitted content. The MCIG believed that the legalisation of video-clubs will, inevitably, raise a chain of other problematic issues: The domestic productions for VCR market will deprive national television and cinema from necessary finance and expertise. Also, the report predicted that the legalisation of video-clubs will require legal importation of huge amounts of video sets, cassettes, and spare parts as well as all other technologies required for domestic productions or duplication of cassettes, and private video cameras. These and other related problems will cause such a financial and administrative 'headache' for the government that inevitably it either will aggressively demolish the process or will neglect the problems and "helplessly witness the moral decadence and extinction of families in the Islamic society; the destiny which had befallen many third world countries" (MCIG, 1990 in Solh-joo, April 1994).

The Islamic Revolutionary Committees' report of April 1990 expressed similar views on the destructive impacts of VCRs. This report admitted that there are 'relatively abundant and shocking statistics of *monkarat* crimes ('sexual sins') that have occurred because of VCRs' educational ability". This report focused on the vulnerability of the adolescents and youth to the 'fatal attractions' of the available *mostahjan* (pornographic) material in the society and concluded that "no family, either religious or simply committed to the familial values of the society, is safe from the anomalous impacts of the dominant VCR culture" (IRC-BPVPS, April 1990 in MCIG, 1990). It revealed that, "based on the files [of the arrested persons], almost 90% of the customers

of these materials are under 20 years old, mostly students, and the remaining 10% are the rich. Also, 90% of the *Video-Men* are between 20 and 27 years old” (Ibid.).⁸⁸

The MCIG and IRC, the opponents of legal video-clubs, described VCR as an extraordinary source of ‘satanic effects’ on the ethics of the Muslim nation. Using a deductive and moralising language, they used shocking examples which associated VCRs with all ‘immoral and sickening’ actions, individuals, and places. To give but one example, a report by Ministry of Interior, based on statistics produced by the IRC-BPVPS, extensively focused on the ‘interrelationship’ between VCR (precisely the *mostahjan* material) and *fasad* and *fah-sha*’ (decadence and lasciviousness). It reads that “in order to persuade women and girls to work for them, the people who establish places to provide sexual pleasures provide video sets and pornographic films, along side alcohol and drugs” (Ministry of Interior, n.d. in MCIG, 1990). It is possible to summarise the views of the opponents of legal video-clubs. They believed that *the destructive effects of video sets and cassettes, especially but not exclusively among the most vulnerable (the youth and adolescents), is increasing in the society and the satanic VCR culture is even penetrating the most resistant sectors of the nation.*

VCR a national debate: 1991-92

Following these debates VCR was transformed into one of the important media-related national subjects. This period witnessed a long, heated and intensifying debate on VCRs. Various political factions, state departments, influential policy-makers, independent scholars and literary-cultural figures and groups were involved in this ‘national’ debate. The debates inside the state departments were closely followed and developed by the print media. During this period, an increase in the number and diversity of publications made an open discussion on VCRs possible. From early summer 1991 newspapers and periodicals were involved closely in the debates. In the three years between 1370-72 (1991/92-1993/94) at least 20, 47, and 35 articles appeared under the title of VCR in the then flourishing print media.⁸⁹ Here, using available printed articles

⁸⁸ The very same statistics were the bases of Hojjatoleslam Akbar-zadeh’s demand for the legalisation of controlled video-clubs.

⁸⁹ Information based on *Majmoo’-e Magalat-e Farhangi dar Nashriyat-e Jomhuri-ye Eslami-e Iran* (Index of Cultural Articles in the Publications of the Islamic Republic of Iran) and *Nemayeh*.

and documents, I will try to give an account of the contradicting views on VCRs and video-club activities in Iran which only came to an end with their legalisation in 1993.

It seems that the early publications almost unanimously followed, and developed, some features of existing anti-VCR discourse. As to the political factional affiliation of the publications, it seems that all the factions primarily warned, to some degree, of a severe danger from VCRs and more particularly from the *mostahjan* material.⁹⁰ But, the political factions gradually developed different views on VCRs.

The anti-VCR view prevailed during 1370 (1991/92). Hojjatolislam Khatami, the Minister of Culture & Islamic Guidance, in a press conference repeated the Ministry's opposition to the legalisation of video-clubs. He emphasised that VCR, besides its moral dangers for the society at large, is a powerful rival of the Iranian cinema. He believed that the film industry with its present financial base and the qualitative and quantitative levels of its productions will suffer if VCRs are legalised (see, *Kayhan* and *Abrar*, 8 July 1991). The newly combined police forces continued their task to confiscate illegal video sets and cassettes. For instance, on 10 November newspapers reported that a huge warehouse containing hundreds of thousands of foreign and pre-revolutionary Iranian *mobtazal* cassettes was discovered. According to the confessions of the arrested members of the 'gang', it was alleged that the store was one of the main sources for the duplication of cassettes inside Iran. It was also claimed that the 'gangsters' have had contacts with individuals of different positions of the foreign Embassies in Tehran (*Kayhan* and *Abrar*, 10 November 1991).

At the same time, the demand for the legalisation of video-clubs was sporadically voiced by some of the political and cultural figures. Once Ayatollah Haeri, a prominent clergy, said that "we can not use police forces to confront VCRs. But, we must employ the same methods and instruments that are used to produce the culture of indulgence [...] We must reply video with video, film with film, and poem with poem" (*Abrar*, 16 December 1991). The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance opposed the suggestion. Hojjatolislam Nouri, the Minister of Interior, in a

⁹⁰ For example see, *Jahan-e Eslam*, "VCR Pollution" (10 July 1991) and a ten-part article "Who is to blame?" (17-29 August); *Abrar*, "Video: A cultural service or treason...?!" (12 and 14 August); *Et'tela'at*, "How to confront 'Videoism'?" (5 November); Mahdavi, "The *mobtazal* video-cassettes pave the way for a moral explosion of families" (*Kayhan*, 17 and 26 August); and Rajabi, "Video: The promoter of the culture of indecency" (*Salam*, 7 November 1991).

press interview noted that “the danger posed by VCRs and *mobtazal* cassettes to the society is much more than that of drugs” (see, e.g., *Abrar*, 28 December 1990). The sporadic demand for a policy change continued and Hojjatoleslam Ashtiani, a Deputy Attorney of Tehran, said that the cultural institutions (i.e., the MCIG, VVIR, and Islamic Propagation Organisation) must produce useful programmes and establish distribution centres to prevent the youth as well as others from being pushed toward the degenerating materials (*Kayhan*, 27 January 1991).

These opinions intensified ongoing debates on a proper national VCR policy within the relevant government organisations. But, the opposition of the MI and MCIG to the, yet relatively unclear, demands for a ‘change’ in the status quo blocked the VCR discussions in the press. Instead, during this period, the immediate development of satellite television channels and the domination of debates on the “cultural invasion” of the country by Western media products preoccupied the press. The atmosphere changed noticeably after the beginning of 1371 Iranian year (March 1992). Possibly as a result of the indecisiveness of the officials in Tehran, several provinces adopted a policy to develop ‘legal’ video-clubs. The daily *Abrar* on 27 May 1992 reported the establishment of the first video-club in Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf. The Director-General of Culture & Islamic Guidance of the province called the aim of the video-club “confrontation with the cultural invasion by the West”. He said that “regarding the vulnerability of the Hormozgan province and the current availability of 10 foreign television channels, the province pioneeringly has decided to establish a centre to distribute high quality cultural domestic and international cinematic productions” (*Abrar*, 27 May 1992). The following day *Alborz* published a letter from the Social Council of Khorasan province demanding the legalisation of VCRs and establishment of video-clubs. The Governor of the province had stressed that “in the present situation we must do our best to resist against the diffusion of indulgent Western culture”. He then concluded that video could even play a positive role in the current situation (*Alborz*, 28 May 1992). These demands were supported by several literary-cultural figures as well (see, e.g., Kasa’ian in *Kayhan*, 25 June 1992).

In another incident, the Bureau of Islamic Propagation Organisation (IPO) in Karaj, a big city 30 km west of Tehran, founded a video-cassette rental called “Video

Cassette Bank”⁹¹. The head of the IPO in the city said that the aim of the Bank was to “neutralise the existing ‘un-permitted’ video-cassettes in the city”. This centre provided ‘permitted’ tapes for a price less than that of ‘un-permitted’ rentals and even the fee was voluntary (*Resalat* and *Kayhan*, 23 June 1992). After these attempts in the provinces, the Ministry of Interior changed its attitude toward VCRs. Hojjatoleslam Nouri, the Minister of Interior, expressed his support for the establishment of video-clubs. He said: “marginalisation of the social problems of the youth and other groups of the people is a danger for the government. As the confrontation policy with VCRs has created inappropriate social consequences[...].” (*Abrar*, 29 June 1992). This shift occurred as a result of the general political changes in the country. Also, it may have been in the light of the fact that some provincial officials were , apparently, adopting alternate *ad hoc* policies opposed to those of the government in the capital.

Meanwhile, it remained the duty of the newly re-organised police forces to confront the smuggling and moral crimes, including video sets and cassettes. The police reportedly had confiscated respectively 180 and 16,000 illegal video sets and *mobtazal* video-cassettes in the Greater Tehran during the month of Shahrivar (23 August-22 September 1992) (*Abrar*, 21 September 1992). It is useful here to note that the police reports on the ‘discovered’ VCRs usually point to the involvement of other illegal goods or crimes as well. To give but one example, it was reported that a centre for duplication and distribution of *mobtazal* video cassettes was discovered in Abadan and the suspects were also involved in the production and distribution of alcohol (*Kar va Karegar*, 15 June 1992). Also, another report referred to the discovery of drugs and alcohol along with illegal video sets and cassettes (*Kayhan*, 28 June 1992). But it seems that the police forces, somehow indirectly, advocated the establishment of legal video-clubs. For instance, Engineer Khorram, the Governor of Hamadan province, in a police conference admitted to the existence of 1.5m video sets while the ‘permitted and acceptable’ titles in the country were only a handful. He also revealed that the police has disbanded two groups of 14 men and 9 women who were active in the production of *mostahjan* films in Bandar Abbas. He, again indirectly, admitted to the insufficiency of police confrontation with the VCR. According to him, “only in the spring of 1991 and only at the border of Hormozgan province 5,000 illegal VCRs had been confiscated by the police. The rate of

⁹¹ “*Bank-e Navarha-ye Vidiyo-ie*”, in Persian.

discovery, according to expert estimates, was only 5% and remaining 95% of smuggled VCRs (95 thousand) had been distributed inside the country” (see *Salam*, 5 August 1992).

However, the MCIG maintained its opposition to the legalisation of VCRs and video-clubs. The Ministry condemned the establishment of video-clubs in the provinces. In the case of the “Video Cassette Bank” of Karaj the MCIG claimed that “the establishment of such centres, according to the laws, are only possible after permission from the MCIG and that this was not among its current policies. Therefore, the activities of the “Video Cassette Bank” of Karaj are not permitted and, therefore, are illegal” (*Kayhan*, 30 June 1992). The MCIG, apparently at this stage, was the only vocal government organisation opposing the establishment of video-clubs. However, during the summer of 1992 several factors decisively affected the course of the future national VCR-policy. Hojjatoleslam Khatami, the ten year Minister of CIG who had announced the prohibition policy in the beginning of his tenure, resigned on 17 July. His resignation was the result of the developing differences in the policy orientations of the political factions (see previous section on the limits of media development). Also, the elections for the *Majlis* were to be held in April. In the highly controversial atmosphere of the election period (June-August), the conservative and reformist political factions increasingly publicly attacked the ‘radical’ policies of the previous years -including the prohibition policy of VCRs (see Sarabi, 1994; and Siavoshi, 1992). This period of open debate, can be said to have, brought to the surface the somehow hidden demands of the public as well as officials for the establishment of video-clubs and legalisation of VCRs.

The subsequent changes of the top officials of the MCIG very soon affected the national VCR-policy. The new Minister, Ali Larijani, in mid-October publicised his opinions on VCRs and denounced the prohibition policy as ‘irrational’ (*Soroush*, no. 656, 7 August 1993). His views provoked a wave of opinions in the society from key politicians to cultural figures and policy-makers to the ordinary people. Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani, the President, expressed his positive views for the legalisation of VCRs. He said that “VCR can not be taken away from the people. The government should use it to provide good entertainment for the leisure time of the people, particularly the youth, otherwise satellites will very soon take on this task.” Ayatollah Khamene’i, the Spiritual Leader, ordered the government to regulate the VCR and provide a new policy. Also,

Hojjatolislam Nateg-Nouri, the new Speaker of the *Majlis*, condemned the policy of confrontation of the government with VCRs. He believed that the policy of forceful confrontation with VCRs had failed and the same policy will not work in the case of satellites in future.⁹²

Following these comments, several state departments as well as non-governmental organisations published guidelines of their plans for the establishment of video rentals. The Higher Council of Cultural Revolution (HCCR), the highest body for policy-making in the cultural sphere, revealed that it had been discussing the subject for several months (see, e.g., *Abrar*, 21 September 1992) and finally announced its approval of the legalisation policy (*Resalat*, 30 September 1992). Of important interest here are the publications of two private cinematic associations: “Club of Iranian Film Directors” and “Central Council of the Society of Iranian Film Producers and Distributors”.⁹³ These groups ‘unveiled’ the cinematic organisations’ suggestion for a (monopoly) license from the government to establish video-clubs and small video show-rooms. They aimed to direct the (expectedly huge) revenues of the free activities of video rentals and show-rooms to finance and develop the national film industry⁹⁴ (*Resalat*, 30 October 1992).

Alongside ongoing discussions within the state departments on a new VCR policy after the establishment of ‘(il)legal’ video-clubs in some cities (March 1992) the print media continued to reflect and expand on the existing views. An article by Khosravi, Fazaie, and Gholi-poor, appeared in *Gozarash-e Film* (no. 25, May 1992) which possibly was the first ‘investigative’ report on VCRs in Iran. The report referred to ‘anomalies’ caused by the underground existence of VCRs. In particular, the article focused on the effects of the approximately 2m video sets on national cinema and advanced two opinions. One opinion held that VCRs and cinema compliment each other while the other believed that video will dominate and finally destroy the national cinema. The former, according to the article, is optimistic and idealistic while the latter seems to have been based on the realities of the relatively weak Iranian cinema (p. 48). The article, then, compared the two media in Iran and estimated that annually 1 billion viewers use VCRs and so the total number of film viewers through VCR and the

⁹² On these comments see “Video: The Closed File” in *Soroush* (no. 656, 7 August 1993: 40-42).

⁹³ In Persian called respectively “*Kanoun-e Kargardanan-e Sinema-ye Iran*” and “*Shoura-ye Markazi-ye Majma'-e Towlid va Towzi' Konandegan-e Film-e Iran*”.

⁹⁴ On this plan also see Mansouri (25 November 1992).

revenues of cassettes-distributors are twenty times more than the annual number of cinema-goers and revenues of the film industry (p. 46). It also pointed to the existence of a division among the film professionals. The majority, including the authorities of the Farabi Cinematic Foundation (FCF) and the Cinema Deputy of MCIG, on the one hand, believed that the expansion of VCRs would financially damage the cinema industry. The article claimed that a small group of film professionals believed that the damaging impact of VCRs' legalisation on national cinema may be a short-term and that in the long-term it can develop quantitatively and qualitatively by relying on its unique characteristics (pp. 50-52).

The article was followed by tens of investigative articles, translations, reports, editorials and alike. The opponents of the legalisation of video-clubs generally warned of severe dangers from the prevailing video material. According to Fazeli (1993), the advocates of the anti-VCR discourse believed that the *mobtazal* material: a) seriously destroys the indigenous cultural structure in the long-term; b) attacks the sacred institution of family that is the most important social institution and is guarded by religio-cultural values of the society; c) couples with other factors that increase crime and delinquency rates among the youth; d) transforms the leisure time from productive educational activities into prosy and aimless entertainment and so damages the level of mental activities of the users and causes learning and behavioural problems in the schools; e) neutralises the educational and spiritual programmes of the national mass media; f) creates an environment that is in opposition to that of the Islamic pedagogy in the schools and, therefore, causes dual personality and identity crisis among the students; g) expands the inter-generational distance within the families by creating and developing attitudinal and behavioural differences between the parents and their children (Fazeli, 1993: 46-53).

The publications of the 1991-93 period advanced these views. An article in *Abrar* ("Video: secret penetration within the privacy of families") argued that the abundant supply of new sets by the 'underground network' and the subsequent reduction of prices was threatening the social values. It reads that "the underground existence of video-cassette market provides a fertile environment for the development of delinquent groups. Being from lower classes and unemployed, the young cassette distributors confront

cultural-religious-social 'anti-values from both sides.'⁹⁵ On the one side, they are connected with the agents of the underground world who are generally morally and culturally corrupt and promote the indulgent values of the Western culture. On the other side, the cassette distributors have contacts with their customers a vast majority of whom have been brought up within (and so promote) the same 'anti-values' [...] This process is diffusing the 'unacceptable life-style and values of the upper classes into the lower class families of the cassette distributors" (*Abrar*, 31 May 1992).

Some papers even tried to show that the legalisation of VCR could seriously harm the reconstruction of the national economy. For instance, the editorial of the daily *Kar va Kargar* on 10th June 1992 argued that VCRs could develop dependent industries and, hence, damage the independent development. Referring to the decreasing price of a 'luxury' such as VCR despite the high inflation rate, the article concluded that video sets and cassettes expand consumerism and individualism. Therefore, further diffusion of VCR due to its legalisation could harm the reconstruction policies which require active participation of all sectors of the nation (*Kar va Kargar*, 10 June 1992).

The anti-VCR discourse developed a dramatised poetic and polemic language based on the dichotomous ideology of the Revolution. It associated video sets and cassettes with all 'immoral, criminal, and satanic' conducts, individuals, and places. In order to achieve persuasiveness, the discourse coined several terms, besides the then commonplace *mobtazal* and *mostahjan*. A few examples of the anti-VCR terminology include: *Videology* as it is contrasted to ideology. The latter refers to the valued Islamic ideology that is considered the motive and reason for a constructive social life. But *Videology*, the aim of the international arrogance for the expansion of Western culture through video cassettes, refers to the system of values and thoughts 'learnt' from Western video programmes that contradict the Islamic political and social culture.⁹⁶ Similar to *Videology*, *Videoism* refers to the 'destructive' ideological effects of the *mobtazal* video cassettes. Combined with the suffix -ism, *Videoism* connotes the counter-cultural movements of the Western youth such as Hippism, Punkism, and Nudism.⁹⁷ The poetic-mythic language of the anti-VCR discourse defined VCR as a

⁹⁵ 'Zed-de arzhesh' in Persian.

⁹⁶ On this see, e.g., Education Department of Isfahan (September 1992) "Videology or Ideology?!".

⁹⁷ On this see, e.g., *Et'tela'at*, "How to confront 'Videoism'?" (5 November 1991).

mysterious box, demonic and a rebellious media, double-edged sword, monster, Octopus, and so on. It also described VCR as the fifth column of the enemy and as the agent and channel of, among many others, cultural onslaught, corruption, deviant sexual education, and brain-washing. Also, phrases that associated video with AIDS, virus, microbe, bacteria, epidemic and alike were widely used in the print media.⁹⁸

The press also used other methods to persuade the people as well as policy-makers to condemn video sets and cassettes. They widely printed translations on the 'demonic' impact of VCRs in other, particularly Muslim, countries and eagerly reflected anti-VCR opinions. For instance, Professor Oskaro in an international conference in Tehran noted that pornographic and violent content is widespread in Uzbekistan and had gradually degenerated the youth. This speech was extensively quoted in the press and broadcast media (see, e.g., *Abrar* and *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, 19 November 1992). Another method used was the repetition of views expressed by famous and 'knowledgeable' individuals. For example, an article by Dr. Ali-Asghar Khoda-Doost, an internationally renowned Iranian eye surgeon residing in the United States, compared VCRs with atomic bombs and concluded that the former causes more destruction than the latter. This article appeared under different titles in *Javanan-e Emrouz* (no. 1274, 12 May 1992); *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* (25 May); *Jahan-e Eslam* (10 June); *Tarbiat* (no. 10 Summer 1992); *Abrar* (9 November) and many other publications.

The advocates of the establishment of video-clubs, although generally accepting the moral dangers, insisted that legalisation of VCRs is the only way to impose control on the market. *Hamshahri*, a monthly, in its first issue (May 1992: 12-16) questioned the omnipresent terminology of the anti-VCR discourse. In particular, it focused on the term *mobtazal* and complained that some groups in the society denounce any film and art or thought that they dislike as *mobtazal* (lit.: commonplace, boring, dull, prosy, routine, and cliché but in this context indecent and something of *Taghuti* culture). Another article by Orouji (*Farhang va Sinema*, no. 17, May 1992: 4-5) pointed to the attraction of VCR technology in a society in which the conventional media lack

⁹⁸ For example see Fahimi-far, "Video: Constructive or destructive" and Video: A cultural-political [Western] invader" (*Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, 1 and 15 July 1992); "Video" (*Et'tela'at*, 27 June 1992); Sariri Parvani, "Video and its negative impacts" (*Et'tela'at*, 27 June 1992); "Video as Yankees view it" (*Arzesh*, no. 19, 3 August 1992); Nabavi, "The role of image in the cultural invasion" (*Resalat*, 15 August 1992) among tens of other articles.

sufficient entertaining programmes. The article stated that, despite the claims by relevant authorities, the VCR market is not totally dominated by harmful material and in fact useful and artistic films are also in circulation. It also pointed to the spontaneous control mechanisms adopted by the families and even the cassette distributors (*Video-Men*) on culturally 'un-acceptable' material. It even concluded that the prohibition policy has actually pushed the customers toward *mobtazal* productions.

The debates between June and December 1992 revealed that all the state departments accepted a necessary change in the existing VCR-policy. The new administration of MCIG, the last opponent of the legalisation policy, in fact triggered the latest and strongest wave of comments by the high-ranking political figures. The wave of change-related comments coincided with the convening of the fourth *Majlis* which was dominated by members of the conservative-reformist alliance. While the wave of criticism of the VCR policy had coincided with the period of election campaigns. One may suggest that Ali Larijani's report to the fourth *Majlis* on 20 December 1992 was a crucial point in the discussions on VCRs in Iran. His report ended the phase of discussion on whether or not to accept the existence of VCRs in Iran. The new phase involved the question "How to regulate legal VCR-related businesses?" The Minister in his report said that the global condition had changed and the new world order is that of domination of the Third World by Western cultural and media technologies. He believed that the new era is the age of cultural conflicts and that the Islamic Republic must preserve the cultural identity of the nation and the sovereignty of the state. In order to do this, he added, the state must develop the quality and quantity of the Iranian media (books, cinema, radio and television). Hence, it must accept the existence of VCR technology in Iran (an estimated 2.5m sets at the time) and attempt to 'rehabilitate' its uses.⁹⁹ Also, the MCIG requested the *Majlis* to allocate up to 7 billion Rls. for its proposed plans in the budget of the coming year 1372 (1993/94). The plans included the founding of 50 video show-rooms each with a capacity for 100 viewers, establishment and development of a centralised national video organisation, annual video film festivals and other VCR-related projects.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ For a print of this report see *Film* (no. 135, December 1992: 6-8).

¹⁰⁰ On this see a summary of the report in *Soroush* (no. 656, 7 August 1993: 40-42).

It should be noted here that the majority of the advocates and opponents of the VCRs in the print media agreed on the neutrality of the VCR technology as they expressed similar 'perceived dangers' from the dominant content. These groups also were equally critical of the national mass media and of the shortages of cultural, entertainment facilities in the society. Yet again, both groups advanced similar suggestions which included the qualitative and quantitative development of the media, 'cultural vaccination,' expansion of cultural and entertainment facilities, growth of tourism and alike.¹⁰¹ In particular, the development of the national cinema and radio-television was the central suggestion of all critiques. The suggestions even included inauguration of private television channels and Cable televisions.¹⁰² The only major distinction between the advocates and opponents of VCRs was based whether or not to accept the video-clubs as legal businesses. However, during the period of intense discussions, June-December 1992, the advocates of the legalisation of video-clubs succeeded within the political as well as public spaces.

VCRs 'Legalised': 1993

In 1992 and in the context of the developing foreign television channels through satellites, the state departments as well as the print media agreed on the establishment of video-clubs. But, from the outset it was made clear that the activities of the rentals will be controlled centrally. Even before the official announcement of the new policy, the print media were speculating on the guidelines which would control the VCR market. For instance, Mahdavi in an article ("The distribution of [legal] video cassettes requires a comprehensive plan") speculated that the activities of future video-clubs will be 'conditional'. He believed that all precautions must be taken to save the cinema industry and the moral foundations of the society from further 'damages' (*Kayhan*, 1 July 1992).¹⁰³ The video sets and cassettes for almost a decade had been presented as a 'source of direct demonic impact'. Possibly as a result of this, their 'legalisation' was such a crucial politico-cultural step that the state, inevitably, decided to tread cautiously.

¹⁰¹ On these suggestions see Fazeli (1993: 71-90).

¹⁰² See, for instance, Fahimi-far, "Video: Constructive or destructive" (*Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, 1 and 15 July 1992); and Sariri Parvani, "Video and its negative impact" (*Et'tela'at*, 27 June 1992).

¹⁰³ For similar opinions see, e.g., "Video; must be cautious" (*Janbaz*, no. 31, July 1992); and "The legalisation of video and some precautions" (*Sinema*, no. 26, 7 November 1992).

Moreover, it is a fact that the government had adopted the legalisation policy in the context of the growing penetration of foreign media content and under pressure from the public for the development of entertainment channels in the society. This was evident even in the private print media. Before the period of official discussions on VCRs, *Pahlavan*, a tabloid-style weekly, in an article by Karimi suggested that the government should consider the establishment of video-clubs merely as acceptance of an 'ugly necessity'. Tellingly, it compared VCRs with a 'sixth finger' that, according to a Persian idiom, is ugly and abnormal yet its place seems empty when it is removed (*Pahlavan*, no. 160, 21 April 1992). This seems to have been the perception of the government authorities as well. Consequently, the establishment of video-clubs progressed slowly and took almost a year to be realised.

However, in January 1993, the Higher Council of Cultural Revolution (HCCR) authorised the MCIG to supervise all legal VCR-related activities in the country. Following the authorisation, the MCIG established a centralised organisation called Institute of Visual Media (IVM).¹⁰⁴ The head of IVM, Sadat-Nedjad, was also appointed as a consultant of the Minister of CIG. The IVM's organisational structure and responsibilities are similar to those of Farabi Cinematic Foundation (FCF). The FCF and IVM are directly controlled by the MCIG and tend to impose state control respectively on the national film industry and the developing legalised video 'industry'. The officials of the IVM announced plans for the establishment of video show-rooms and video-rentals by private investors. They also invited private sector involvement in the development of other VCR-related businesses including domestic video productions and film studio services.¹⁰⁵ The establishment of IVM and its plans show that the MCIG, which it welcomed private investment, tended to secure its centralised control on all legal VCR-related businesses.

In the meantime, which the main change in the national VCR policy was the establishment of IVM, several other changes could be noted. These include development of research on VCRs by state departments and academic researchers; abundance of VCR sets and increase of prices; the continuing speculation of the print media on the meaning of 'legalisation'; the issue of illegal video-clubs; a change in the policies of the police and

¹⁰⁴ "*Mo'as-se-se-ye Rasane-ha-ye Tasviri*", in Persian.

¹⁰⁵ On this see, e.g., "Video: A closed file" in *Soroush* (no. 656, 7 July 1993: 40-42).

new laws; and developments of VCR-industry as well as professional publications on VCRs.

The relative acceptance of the existence of VCRs in the country by the government and its attempt to organise a national supply system gradually affected research on VCRs. Although the amount of research information can not be reckoned, here are two examples of systematic studies on VCRs in recent years. From 1370 (1991/2), the Centre for Cinematic Research, affiliated to the Cinema Deputy of MCIG established an annual research with a sample of 1,500 VCR audiences in Tehran. The research was repeated in the following years and until mid-1994 three reports had been published. These are actually designed to provide complementary information on the attendance and genre preferences of the cinema audience which are studied annually by the Centre for Cinematic Research. These reports, "On VCRs: 1, 2, & 3"¹⁰⁶, provide statistics on issues such as popularity of VCRs; genre and language preferences; viewing context and schedules; rental methods; satisfaction from, and attitudes toward, different aspects of VCR-related issues in the society. Also, independent university researchers have focused on some aspects of the impact of VCR technology. For instance, Homa Agha published the findings of her comparative studies on the leisure time activities of school students in Shiraz between two periods of 1977 and 1988, with the second including VCR viewership (see, *Hamshahri*, 15 July 1993).

The gradual legalisation of VCRs slowly eased the police crack-down on video sets and cassettes. However, the process of 'de-criminalisation' progressed cautiously. In late May 1993 the Chief Justice Department ordered the police forces to decisively confront the 'morally corrupting' *mobtazal* and *mostahjan* video material (*Salam*, 30 May 1993). But, apparently the government very soon ordered the police forces to limit their search and confiscation campaigns to the underground 'gangs' which are involved in the production and distribution of illegal cassettes. In this regard Hojjatoleslam Elahi, one of the officials of the police forces, announced that "the police are quite determined in their fight against illegal cassettes but they do not have the authority to harass or search people in streets for suspected possession of video sets or cassettes" (*Kar va Kargar*, 20, July 1993).

¹⁰⁶ "Jostari dar Zamine-ye Vidiyo" in Persian.

However, reports showing the alleged direct impact of *mostahjan* video cassettes on crimes such as murder, rape, sexual affairs and alike continued to appear in the press.¹⁰⁷ On 13 February 1994 the *Majlis* passed a law called “the Law of the Punishment of Illegal Audi-Visual Activities.”¹⁰⁸ It was designed to authorise the police to combat the current illegal cassette distribution as well as to prevent future legal video rentals from distributing ‘un-permitted’ material among the ones approved by the IVM and MCIG. The law, for the first time, formally defined the terms *mobtazal* and *mostahjan* as legal terms. It also defined relevant punishments for those involved in production, duplication, propagation, and distribution of the illegal materials. The severity of punishments -ranging from financial penalties to death- are based on the importance of the role of the convicted criminals.

The gradual normalisation of VCRs, however, increased the prices. This was due to the relaxation of the police confrontation with the illegal VCR trade, abundance of the yet illegal video sets and an increase in the demand for new sets. Also, the import tariffs once again increased the prices when VCRs were legally imported from mid-1994.¹⁰⁹ The legalisation of VCR as a medium also meant that domestic video productions had to be facilitated and recognised by the government. In this regard and even before the inauguration of video-clubs, the first video festival was held between 24-27 December 1993 in Tehran. The first annual *Soureh* Video Festival was organised by Art Circle¹¹⁰ of the IPO and was repeated in the following years. The first festival sought to “define the status of VCR as a medium in the society; develop the Islamic cultural criteria for the video; increase the quality and quantity of the domestic video productions; and recognise and honour the young artistic talents in the field”.¹¹¹

Another noticeable change that the announcement of the new policy brought about is the development of professional journals on VCRs. The monthly *Film*, that had actually started publication under the title *Sinema dar Video* (*Cinema in Video*) in 1982 and had changed its name, from its 157th issue (April 1995) once again considered VCR as a serious subject. It established a section under its original title for VCR news and

¹⁰⁷ For a summary of four such reports between June 1993-February 1994 see *Video-Mahvareh* (no. 3, April 1994: 34).

¹⁰⁸ “*Ghanoon-e Nahve-ye Mojazat-e Motakhal-lefin-e Omur-e Sam’ie va Basari*” in Persian.

¹⁰⁹ On this see, e.g., *Film* (no. 159, My 1994);

¹¹⁰ “*How’ze-ye Honari*” in Persian.

¹¹¹ The aims from an invitation to the Festival in *Farhang va Sinema* (no. 27, July-August 1993: 66).

articles. The weekly *Soroush*, too, allocated a few pages (usually 5-10 out of total 60-70 pages in each issue) to the subject from its 664th issue (2 October 1993). Also, the IVM founded its own journal (*Video-Mahvareh*) in February 1994 which carried many up-to-date information and analysis but its publication was halted after its third issue.

The Institute of Visual Media (IVM) and Shops for Distribution of Cultural Products (SDCPs): 1994

However, the main policy shift in Iran during 1372 (1993/4) in relation to VCRs was the establishment of the Institute of Visual Media by the MCIG. As the IVM itself claimed later, “it has been established in a relatively difficult situation and has to achieve puzzling tasks. On the one hand, it has to provide ‘proper’ entertainment-oriented programmes for the millions of VCR viewers and, on the other, it has to compete with the well-developed multi-billion Rls. illegal cassette market” (“Video: From hidden life until open presence” in *Video-Mahvareh*, no. 1, February 1994). As Sadat-Nedjad defined them later, the strategic aims of the IVM include re-organising leisure facilities and reconstructing public opinions. He argued that these constitute part of the main aims and responsibilities of the Islamic state in order to realise material as well as spiritual justice, welfare and security for the nation. He believed that these had been ignored during the years of the revolutionary turmoil and the war with Iraq. Also, according to Sadat-Nedjad, the IVM considers VCR as a medium that can only play a small role in providing entertainment in a society in which severe economic difficulties are combined with extreme shortages of entertainment facilities. Hence, VCR is not a rival for the national broadcasting and cinema industries (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 1, February, 1994: 20-21).

A combination of the difficult tasks of the IVM with the MCIG’s desire for a monopoly of control on the VCR market resulted in a very slow development of legal video rentals and businesses. The initial plan for the establishment of rentals for the mid-1993 was delayed. Finally, on 27 January 1994 the IVM and its rental chain were officially opened by Dr. Habibi, the First Deputy to the President, signifying the importance of the IVM (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 1, February 1994: 11). However, according to its initial plans, the IVM’s activities included direct involvement in the

production of domestic video programmes; purchase and dubbing of new foreign films; purchase of the video rights of old domestic and foreign films; duplication of video cassettes and their distribution to the rentals. It also cooperates with private companies and other governmental departments in the production of domestic entertainment as well as educational-informative programmes. These activities by mid-1994 were in an embryonic stage and still had to be developed. By then the IVM, directly or indirectly through cooperation with other organisations, was producing the following educational-informative programmes on school courses; the history of the national Iranian Football Team; *Ta'ziyeh* (i.e., the traditional, religious passion plays), 2300 minutes; the preparation for university entrance exams, 2800 minutes; and lessons on driving, reading and memorising the Qur'an, calligraphy, body-building, cooking, photography and so on.¹¹²

In order to achieve these tasks the IVM contacted domestic and foreign copy-right owners and established a duplication centre in March 1994. The centre is equipped with five separate systems each with the capacity to produce 500 copies from one original cassette, overall a capacity of 1:2,500 -allegedly the highest in the Middle East (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 2, March 1994: 5). The IVM co-operates with other companies in the production of domestic programmes. This new business has given rise to new companies, with some affiliated to the existing national cultural organisations, such as *Sima Film* by VVIR. Moreover, video productions for industrial purposes have been developed, though not relevant to popular uses of VCRs. As a result of the legalisation policy, since 1993, many factories have produced advertisements or documentaries to introduce their products in domestic or international exhibitions.¹¹³ There are other signs of an embryonic VCR industry as gradually the VCR is being 'de-criminalised'. For example, by the end of 1994 three factories were said to have developed plans for the production of up to 300,000 video sets annually (*Sinema-Video*, no. 1, 12 December 1994).

However, the main activity of the IVM is the local distribution of video-cassettes to the customers. In this regard, the IVM has adopted several policies. It planned to

¹¹² Information from three published issues of *Video-Mahvareh*, February-April 1994.

¹¹³ For more information and examples see the three issues of *Video-Mahvareh*, February-April 1994 and other relevant publications in journals such as *Sinema-Video*, *Soroush*, and *Film*.

license in several stages up to 4 thousand rentals throughout the country. These rentals, unequivocally called “Shops for Distribution of Cultural Products” (SDCPs),¹¹⁴ were established during 1994 (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 2, March 1994: 3-4; *Gozarash-e Film*, no. 50, March 1994: 143). From the outset the IVM strictly controlled the SDCPs. Apparently, a vast majority of the licenses were issued to the most politically and religiously ‘loyal’ applicants who belong to the Revolutionary strata of the population - i.e., applicants who personally or through members of their families had been involved in the Revolution and the ‘Imposed War’. Also, the law passed by the *Majlis* had empowered the MCIG and the police to examine closely the activities of the SDCPs. These rentals are also obliged to distribute other cultural products such as books, audio-cassettes, magazines and newspapers.

The IVM classified the video programmes into four categories (each with 3 to 9 sub-groups): stories (e.g., comedy, thriller, science-fiction, etc.); documentaries; educational; and other entertaining programmes (e.g., sports, and music) (*Video-Mahvareh*, no. 3, April 1994: 2). It planned to prepare and distribute 400 films and entertaining programmes (200 Iranian and 200 foreign) during the first year of its activities 1373 (1994/95) and distribute other categories from the following year. These programmes were to be distributed on the bases of 30 titles every month (*Ibid.*: 30).

However, the IVM and SDCPs have faced several problems. There are several reports which suggest that only for a period of two months after the official opening of the IVM in late January 1993 were the cassettes provided by the SDCPs popular. Not surprisingly, the parents and older people were more satisfied with the products. But, very soon frustrated customers, particularly the youth, returned to the illegal market. This was due to the failure of the IVM in providing regularly the required quantity of quality cassettes. According to the customers, the provided programmes were few and boring, did not include recent domestic and foreign productions, and had been repeatedly shown on the national television or at cinemas.¹¹⁵ These complaints appeared to have been based on some facts. For instance, a list of 30 films (15 Iranian and 15 foreign) distributed during the second month of the SDCPs’ activities provides some

¹¹⁴ “*Foroush-gah-haye ‘Arze-ye Mahsoulat-e Farhangi*” in Persian, also translated as “Audio-Visual Shops” in English.

¹¹⁵ See relevant reports in the professional journals such as *Gozarash-e Film* (no. 50), *Gozarash* (no. 38), *Farhang va Sinema* (no. 34), and *Film* (no. 156) all issues of March 1994.

limited information.¹¹⁶ All of the domestic films were cinema productions of relatively recent years (1986-92) which have been screened at cinemas. From the foreign films 6 were old films (1946-1980) and only 9 were produced during the 1980s. These 15 movies were from 8 different countries (mainly, European countries and Japan).

Another report in April (“...But there came troubles!”) said that, in addition to the lack of diversity, the low quality of the provided programmes had been a reason for the disappointment of the customers as well as the SDCPs’ owners. Allegedly, a considerable number of films had been ‘shortened’. This includes even a few of the domestic productions of which a rather different and longer version had been previously shown at cinemas. In other cases, the report alleged that, technical mistakes had occurred during the recordings from 35mm film formats or during the editing. Moreover, the report added that the control mechanisms of the IVM and MCIG have created problems for the SDCP owners. For instance, according to their contracts, the SDCP owners are obliged to check the returned cassettes in order to make sure that the content was not ‘changed’ by the previous customer. This task, as SDCPs owners have claimed, is time-consuming and pointless (*Film*, no., 157, April 1994: 100-2).

By June 1993, the problems of the IVM resulted in the changing of its administration by the MCIG. The monthly journal of IVM was closed and did not continue publication even after the introduction of the new administration. The new Director-General, Jamali, revealed that the IVM has not been successful and is facing many serious problems. For instance he revealed that the monthly films distributed to the SDCPs had not exceeded half of the planned 30 titles. He also admitted that, contrary to the initial plans of the previous administration, the IVM, according to the present regulations, was not allowed to be involved directly in the domestic production and import of foreign films. Instead it had to act through, or on arrangement with, other governmental or independent cinematic organisations: The Farabi Cinematic Foundation for imports and the Club of Iranian Film Directors and Society of Iranian Film Producers and Distributors for domestic productions.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, the change of administration did not result in a noticeable change in the conditions of SDCPs. In the summer of 1994 the daily *Salam* spoke of discontent of

¹¹⁶ The list published in *Video-Mahvareh* (no. 2, March 1994: 58-87).

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., *Film va Sinema* (no. 3, July 1994).

the SDCP owners due to financial losses. The report claimed that most of the rentals were close to bankruptcy since they only rent 3 to 15 cassettes per club/per night (*Salam*, 10 July 1994). A second report by *Salam* put the number of per club/per night rentals at 5-12 cassettes (*Salam*, 29 August and 1 September 1994). The regular distribution of sufficient number of new programmes of 'high quality and diversity' seems to have remained as the main problematic task of the IVM and consequently the SDCPs. By early 1995 the IVM had only provided about 200 titles (*Et'tela'at*, 22 January 1995). By mid-1995, according to a list available in the SDCPs, the total number of programmes amounted to 288. The list also provides other limited information. Out of 156 domestic cassettes 50 are educational and the remaining 106 are cinema films -with not a single title exclusive to the video market nor a title of productions 'banned' for cinema screening. Among 132 foreign movies there is no production of Hollywood or Indian Bollywood. These films, besides 14 common productions, are imported from 26 countries; with America and Japan 19 each; Italy 13; France 9; Germany 8; Poland and Britain each 7; Russia 5; Hungary and Czechoslovakia each 4; Romania 3, and other mostly European countries each with one or two films.

Conclusion

In this chapter it was shown that in a one-year period between June 1988 and July 1989 several changes occurred in Iran which are believed to have created the Second Republic. These events paved the way for the introduction of new reformist and developmental policies in the economic, cultural and political spheres. Economic development was pursued rigorously, while changes in cultural and mass media policies occurred cautiously and slowly. Open discussion on VCR-related issues (such as demand for legalisation of video-club activities) started from early 1990. The debate between various state organisations and political figures was strengthened by numerous independent and affiliated print media. These debates were gradually intensified during 1991 and 1992. Finally, in 1993 VCR was legalised and activities of legal video-clubs were resumed. This policy change was made possible by new shifts in the structure of the Majlis as well as MCIG. Legalisation of VCR was also affected by the development

of discussions on the 'Western cultural onslaught' and future development of direct broadcast by satellites.

The legal video activities were instituted during 1993-94 under the centralised control of the Institute of Visual Media (IVM). The IVM has tried to coordinate all businesses related to the production, duplication, and distribution of video programmes. For the distribution of permitted video programmes, the IVM licensed several thousand rentals (called Shops for Distribution of Cultural Products). The IVM and subsequently the SDCPs face a difficult task of re-gaining audiences from the underground market and have, therefore, faced enormous problems.

Presently, it seems very premature to evaluate the impact of the legalisation policy and the establishment of the centralised and strictly controlled video organisation in Iran (including the IVM and thousands of SDCPs). However, there is enough evidence to prove that the criteria for the selection of programmes are similar to those of national cinema and television. This is contrary to the fact that, according to existing research reports, 62% of the population in Tehran consider VCRs a proper entertainment medium and 67% of the VCR owners and non-owners prefer to watch programmes that are not provided by the national media. The same reports admit that men more than women, adolescents and the youth more than other age groups, and the more educated more than other educational groups tend to use VCRs for viewing 'different' material.¹¹⁸ The legalisation policy has not resulted in the demanded 'diversification' of content and, hence, it has not so far altered the popularity of the underground market.

It seems that the IVM and SDCPs have entered in an unequal competition with the illegal cassette distributors. The former can provide a maximum of 30 'new' and 'cleared' programmes obtained from very limited sources while the latter for more than a decade has been providing literally hundreds of new and original programmes from unlimited sources. The competition has also become more unequal since the latter has obtained a new source in addition to the illegally imported video programmes. From

¹¹⁸ On these findings see MCIG-CD-CCR (1991, 1992, 1993) "On VCRs; 1, 2 & 3"; and also a research report (Cinema and the people: a statistical research on the social status of cinema in 1989, 1990, 1991) in *Farhang va Sinema* (no. 25, May 1993: 16-19 and 68).

March 1994 recordings from available satellite channels (e.g., Arabsat) are abundantly distributed through the underground cassette market.¹¹⁹

Having analysed the shifting political context in which VCRs functioned, I now turn to examination of audience use and activities, the second part of my thesis.

¹¹⁹ On this see *Video-Mahvareh*, no. 1, February 1994.

Section Two

A Survey on Cultivation of Selected Attitudes

Chapter VI

Media Effects:

Cultivation Analysis and Audience Activity

Having discussed the changing political and cultural context of VCRs in Iran, I now turn to the individual's uses of and reactions towards the VCR content. It should be reminded that this section is a survey which aims to study the possible long-term effects of several years of exposure to certain types of media content through VCRs among Iranian audiences. Thus, this chapter provides a brief overview of the theories of 'media effects' within their historical context. In the following sections, two 'theories' are discussed in detail which seem to be more applicable in the context of long-term effects of VCRs. The theories are Cultivation Analysis and the notion of Audience Activity which is drawn from Uses & Gratifications. In addition, I will elaborate on the possible applications of these theories in the VCR environment of media-poor developing countries.

Media Effects

Electronic mass communications media and, subsequently the academic study of relevant issues, have a history of almost a century. Nowadays, although with varying degrees, mass media, old and new, are present in various societies and constitute an important part of their socio-cultural structures. The main importance of mass media lies in the fact that they, evidently or presumably, have some kinds of 'effects' on individuals and societal institutions. As McQuail suggests "[t]he entire study of mass communication is based on the premise that the media have *significant effects*, yet there is little agreement on the nature and extent of these assumed *effects*" (1994: 327, emphasis added). During the history of media studies, the notion of media effects has proved to be paradoxical. This is because, on the one hand, everyday experience as well as pragmatic knowledge of media practitioners and academic research verify media

effectiveness while, on the other hand, the same sources can not scientifically attribute particular changes to the media.

Research findings in the field of media effects have often been contradictory. Subsequently, the theorisations during the past century or so have also often been contested. Some studies suggest a substantial influence by the mass media while others only verify limited effects. Nevertheless, apart from the extremist ideas, generations of researchers for decades have repeatedly replied with some kind of 'relativism' to the question of media effects. For instance, Berelson *et al.* in the mid-1950s concluded that "some kinds of communication, on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people, under some kinds of conditions, have some kinds of effects" (1954: 356). Possibly not very surprisingly, McQuail provides a similar conclusion in the mid-1990s. He believes that "the ['paradox of media effects'] can partly be explained in terms of the difference between the general and the particular. We can be sure that particular effects are occurring all the times without being able to see or predict the aggregate outcome or to know after the event how much is attributable to the media. There can be many effects, without any overall pattern or direction" (1994: 327).

The history of academic theorisation on media effects has been dynamic indeed. It has been classified into several phases, each with different conceptualisations about media effects; that is, the relationship between media and their audiences as well as the impacts of the media on other social institutions. Here, the focus is put on a classification provided by McQuail (1994: 328-333) which comprises four phases, though the third and fourth are combined due to lack of a clear distinction. It should be noted here that other scholars, too, distinguish four phases in the history of media effects research. For instance, Severin & Tankark (1992) provide the following, similar to those of McQuail: 'bullet' theory (1900s until the mid-1940s); 'limited effects' model (the mid-1940s until the mid-1960s); 'moderate effects' model (the mid 1960s until the early 1980s); and 'powerful effects' model (since the early 1980s). However, it seems that this classification also suffers from the lack of clear distinction between the third and fourth phases. This is partially because of the parallel continuation of various theories usually classified under the latter two phases.

Phase 1: all-powerful media

This phase extends from the turn of the century until the late 1930s. This was the era of newspapers, cinema and radio as the dominant communications media. These media were believed to possess substantial power to mould opinions, beliefs and attitudes and to shape the behaviour of their audiences. The media were conceived as a 'needle' which directly 'injected' messages into their audiences (see, e.g., Bauer & Bauer, 1960; Kraus & Davis, 1976). These views were not based on scientific research but on observation of the popularity of the press and of the new media of film and radio in the many aspects of everyday life as well as public affairs (McQuail, 1994). The dominant 'hypodermic needle' and 'magic bullets' theories stressed a linear, direct, and inevitable effect of the media on audiences. The media and, therefore, those who control the media, were felt to have a considerable power over their passive and receptive audiences. DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach conclude that these models "assumed that cleverly designed stimuli would reach every individual member of the mass society via the media, that each person would perceive it in the same general manner, and that this would provoke a more or less uniform response from all" (1989: 160).

These theories are believed to have been influenced by the circumstances of the early decades of the century. The various uses of media by war propagandists during World War I, media advertisers, dictatorial states in the inter-war years, and by the new Communist regime in Russia all confirmed the belief that "the media could be immensely powerful" (McQuail, 1994: 328) and "that political leaders and élites could use the media to manipulate the society" (Franklin, 1994: 205).

During the 1920s and 1930s, systematic research on media effects began in the United States and Europe (McQuail, 1994). Social scientists, heavily relying on social psychology, put to test the hypothesis of impact of the media content on the audiences. They particularly focused on the supposedly direct and inevitable 'effects' of portrayals of criminality, sexual behaviour, and violence. Publication of the findings led to the criticism of the hypodermic model and development of new theoretical orientations that are believed to have created a new phase.

Phase 2: theory of powerful media put to the test

This phase of thinking about media started in the early 1930s and continued until the early 1960s. During this period, an increasing amount of research focused on each of the existing media (still the press, radio, and cinema) and, more particularly, on the various content types of each media.¹²⁰ These studies aimed to ‘measure’ the possible harmful effects of media and/or improve media by harnessing them to some desirable ‘pro-social’ goal (McQuail, 1994). Over time and following methodological and theoretical improvements, new kinds of variables were taken into account. These gradually included social and psychological characteristics of the audiences, their personal contacts and social environment, as well as their motives for media uses (Ibid.).

The emerging theoretical orientations that gave importance to the audiences and their social/psychological environment resulted in a departure from the all-powerful media theories. The ‘hypodermic needle’ and ‘magic bullet’ formulations were attacked as simplistic, deterministic, and behaviourist, assuming a very passive and receptive audience. It has been argued that the media-oriented theories tended to ignore the diversity of audiences which are highly differentiated in terms of individual differences of personality, interest, knowledge, and motives (see, Hood, 1980; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; McQuail 1994). Individuals with different psychological characteristics may respond differently to the media portrayals. Furthermore, the media audiences are primarily members of, and therefore affected by, various social structures and sub-structures (such as age, gender, class, race, religious, and political groups) and their membership may influence, in one way or another, the effects of media (see, e.g., DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

The studies of the pre-1960s are retrospectively classified under various theories with differing titles.¹²¹ Here, the “two-step flow of communication” and “uses and gratifications” theories are briefly discussed. The two-step flow of communication

¹²⁰ It is useful here to note that, as for instance DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989) suggest, these studies were uncoordinated and even chaotic. Therefore, all ‘theories’ have been synthesised and labelled later as retrospective creations.

¹²¹ For instance, DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989), calling this phase as the age of ‘selective influence theories’, view a broader perspective and recognise three distinct but related categories of theories; individual differences, social differentiation, and social relationships. These include theoretical developments from all social sciences as well as the two-step flow of communication and uses and gratifications discussed here.

theory developed as the findings of several studies were analysed by researchers such as Lazarsfeld and Berelson (see, Lazarsfeld, *et al.*, 1944; Berelson, *et al.*, 1954). These researchers were trying to assess the impact of media on voting behaviour in American Presidential elections. Their findings seemed to contradict the direct media effects of the hypodermic model and were interpreted as to verify more modest, but complex, effects for media. They discovered that individual's electoral choices were extremely resilient to media influence and the majority had made their decisions in advance of the election campaign in the media (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944). Furthermore, they discovered that informal social relationships had in fact influenced individual's choices of media content. This was interpreted as a process of selective exposure to media and that the media could reinforce the existing choices rather than encouraging change (Clarke & Evans, 1983).

The “two-step flow of communication” theory insisted that interpersonal communication was a much more important factor in determining attitudinal and behavioural changes than the media. This was partially attributed to the fact that the media messages diffused in two stages: from the media to “opinion leaders” and from them to the others (“followers”). The opinion leaders were relatively well-informed, trusted and influential individuals who frequently attended to mass media. The studies found that opinion leaders were not neutral transmitters of media content, rather they provided ‘interpretations’ that could vary from the originally intended meanings of the media practitioners (see, e.g., Katz, 1959; and Klapper, 1960). Therefore, the opinion leaders could form a barrier (or filter) against the direct effects of media on individuals (Lazarsfeld, *et al.*, 1944).

The other important theoretical development in the field of media effects, uses and gratifications model, also occurred in the 1940s. The realisation of the theoretical repercussions of individual differences and social differentiation resulted in a new approach toward the relationship between audiences and the media. This perspective, despite the hypodermic model, regarded the audiences as relatively active in their selection of media messages (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). This approach, pioneered by researchers such as Katz (1959), reversed the question “what do the media do to people?” into one which asks “what do people do with the media?” (Katz, 1959: 2). The studies reversed the power relationships between media and the audiences and focused

on the purposes and expectations of different segments of the audience from their uses of the mass media (Franklin, 1994).

The uses and gratifications theory assumes an active audience who self-consciously choose particular media, and particular content, to gratify certain needs and interests. The audiences 'rational' uses of media content are based on their natural utilitarian search for pleasure and avoidance of pain (Klapper, 1960: Severin & Tankard, 1992). According to Blumler & Katz (1974), the major functions of the media for the audiences include diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance.

The two formulations discussed above, as well as other theoretical orientations of the period, are categorised under 'no (or minimal) effect' paradigm (McQuail, 1994). The theoretical shifts from the all-powerful media models did not actually mean that "the media had been found to be without effects; rather, they were shown to operate within a pre-existing structure of social relationships and a particular social and cultural context" (Ibid.: 329). However, by the late 1950s and early 1960s many historical shifts and theoretical considerations necessitated the development of new perspectives on media-audience relations. The 'no effect' models were not popular outside the social scientific community. The media practitioners (advertisers and propagandists) and even the public resisted the 'relative media impotence' theories. Also, the arrival and unprecedented popularity of television was another reason for the reluctance to accept the 'no effect conclusion'. During the period, television had emerged as a powerful medium that attracted more attention and had far-reaching implications on the individual's everyday, social life (McQuail, 1994). These factors set the scene for the re-discovery of the powerful media models.

Phase 3: powerful media rediscovered

By the early 1960s new theoretical orientations were emerging in the field of media effects. Some of the recent retrospective accounts of the period (e.g., DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Lang & Lang, 1981; McLeod *et al.*, 1991) reveal that the 'no effect' conclusion was only one possible interpretation of the research findings. These authors believe that the conclusion was reached because of a combination of theoretical misconceptions and methodological shortcomings (also see, McQuail, 1994; Chaffee &

Hochheimer, 1982). The 'no effects' theories were criticised for their misinterpretations of the research results. The two-step flow model was criticised for focusing on the short-term effects of the political election campaigns of the media and neglecting the crucial long-term cumulative impacts of the mass media (Lewis, 1991). Also, it has been suggested that the model can not clarify whether the opinion leaders act as an independent or oppositional source of influence in relation to the mass communicated messages through the media (see, e.g., Gitlin, 1978).

Similarly, uses and gratifications studies were criticised for abandoning the legitimate question of media effects because of the failure of methodology. Critics such as Lewis (1991) and Hart (1991) suggest that the model defined the audience needs and expectations in an individualistic and simplistic manner, while the needs and desires are socially constructed during longer periods of time. Therefore, despite the presuppositions of the uses and gratifications theory, the individual audience's needs which may be gratified by the media are actually reflections of that individual's group affiliations and social needs which may be affected by the media.

The major criticisms of the 'no effect' models founded the basis for shifts in the new theoretical orientations. By the early 1970s, there was a demand for return to the concept of powerful media away from the impotent media models (see, e.g., Noelle-Neumann (1973). The newer theories focused on indirect, subtle, and long-term changes at the individual and collective (social and cultural) levels due to the more elaborate media processes. At the individual level attention shifted from immediate media effects on attitude and effect toward longer-term impact on cognition. The new theoretical trends also include a shift toward "intervening variables of context, disposition and motivation, and collective phenomena such as climates of opinion, structures of belief, ideologies, cultural patterns and institutional forms of media provision" (McQuail, 1994: 330-1).

The media effect research also has benefited from studies on the media organisations processes including production and manipulations of media content. Other research interests that have influenced theorisation on media-audience interrelationships are those related to the role of mass communications in societal processes of socialisation and (symbolic) construction of meanings (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989;

McQuail, 1994). With the increasing importance of mass (especially electronic) communications media in contemporary society, media scholars have reflected on their role as agents of continuity of social organisation. A great number of theories, developed in the past decades, deal with the role of mass media in socialisation (and enculturation) of individual members, and production and diffusion of meaning (i.e., knowledge, information, reality) in the contemporary world.¹²²

The more recent studies in the field of media-audience interrelationships, since the early 1970s, show a substantial break with the early 'all-powerful media' paradigm. The shifts have occurred in both theoretical and methodological issues. For instance, contemporary research shows a tendency toward qualitative methods away from the earlier quantitative experimental and survey methods (McQuail, 1994). The shift in methods is similar to those in theoretical orientations since quantitative methods were suitable for the study of immediate, short-term effects while qualitative methods are compatible with long-term changes (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). These recent changes have led some scholars to differentiate the contemporary media studies from the previous ones discussed under the third phase (return to powerful media models). For instance, Gamson & Modigliani (1989) label the new approach 'social constructivist'. Similarly, McQuail calls the new fourth phase 'negotiated media influence' which "allows both for the power of media and for the power of people to choose, with a terrain of continuous negotiation in between, as it were" (1994: 331).

The theoretical shifts during the decades have affected the terminology. Currently, the term 'media effects' does not merely imply the short-term, direct, and intended attitudinal or behavioural changes. "Media 'effects' are simply the consequences of what the mass media do, whether intended or not" (McQuail, 1994: 333) and, therefore, include four types (intended or unintended short- or long-term changes. The shift of terminology is clear in the categories of media effects provided by McQuail (1994). His six possible media effects are a widened version of former threefold types of changes provided by Klapper (1960) (conversion, minor change, and reinforcement). In McQuail's classification four categories of intended, unintended, minor, and facilitation of change are combined with another two 'no effect' types - reinforcement of the

¹²² For a useful summary of relevant theories consult, for instance, McQuail (1994, chapter 14: 352-373) and DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989, chapters 8 and 9: 202-271).

existing and prevention of change. All of these six types are considered as possible effects of media especially at levels above that of the individual (McQuail, 1994: 334).

Based on a classification originally provided by Golding (1981), McQuail (1994: 335-8) designs a diagram of mass media effects with two axes of intended vs. unintended and short-term vs. long-term changes. The various types of possible effects of the media at individual and collective (societal and cultural) levels include: individual response, media campaign, news learning, individual reaction, collective reaction, diffusion in development, news diffusion, diffusion of innovations, distribution of knowledge, socialisation, social control, event outcomes, reality defining and construction of meaning, institutional change, and cultural change.

A great number of theories have developed in the past decades which deal with one or more kinds of media effects in the typology proposed by McQuail.¹²³ Among these theories are the following: theories of 'news diffusion' (see, Rosengren, 1987; Greenberg, *et al.*, 1993); 'agenda-setting' theory developed by McCombs & Shaw (1972, 1993, Shaw & Martin, 1992, and Rogers, *et al.*, 1993); 'spiral of silence' theory developed by Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1984, 1991); 'cultivation theory' developed by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and others (see, e.g., Gerbner, 1972; Gerbner, *et al.*, 1973, 1984, and Signorielli & Morgan, 1990).

Here, I do not intend to provide a summary of these theories, due to their easy availability in the literature. However, one may conclude that, as many have suggested, theoretical approaches toward the media effects have not yet come up with a unified theory. Each of the numerous theories attempt to explain some aspects of the multidimensional phenomena involved. Returning to the main question of media effectiveness, the only agreeable answer for many media scientists throughout the past decades seems to be that of 'relativity'. Just to give some examples, one may consider the conclusions of Berelson, *et al.* (1954), DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989), Katz (1980), Meadow (1985), Perry (1988), and McQuail (1994), among many others. Whether the mass media can have some effects *depends* on many factors/variables related to the media, to the audiences, and to the socio-cultural context in which audiences use the media.

¹²³ For recent theoretical perspectives on the media effects see, for instance, various articles in Bryant & Zillmann (1986), Korzenny & Ting-Toomey (1992), and Rosengren (1994).

Having discussed a brief history of academic approaches toward the problematic of 'media effects', I now focus on the Cultivation Analysis theory and the notion of Audience Activity.

Cultivation Analysis

The cultivation theory is one of the relatively recent approaches toward the long-term effects of media. This theory in particular focuses on implications of television for socialisation and enculturation processes in modern societies. The cultivation hypothesis, among theories of long-term media effects, "remains probably the best documented and most investigated" (McQuail, 1994: 364). The theory has developed as "the third component of a research paradigm called 'Cultural Indicators' that investigates (1) the institutional processes underlying the production of media content, (2) images in media content, and (3) relationships between exposure to television's messages and audience beliefs and behaviours" (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990: 15; Gerbner, 1973). Began in 1968 in America, the Cultural Indicators research continued in the 1970s and 1980s under the sponsorships of numerous American organisations (Gerbner et al., 1986: 18). The research has been carried out by a team of media scholars such as G. Gerbner, L. Gross, M. Morgan, and N. Signorielli who have developed the Cultivation theory and have extensively published on the findings.¹²⁴

Although initially focused on the possible effects of television on violence (e.g., Gerbner, 1969, 1972; Gerbner & Gross, 1976), the Cultural Indicators Project has taken into account a wider range of topics and issues. These issues include the implications of world of television on minority status (Gerbner *et al.*, 1979; Morgan 1983), sex-role stereotypes (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1979; Morgan & Signorielli, 1989), age-role stereotypes (Gerbner *et al.*, 1980), health (Gerbner, Morgan & Signorielli, 1982), science (Gerbner *et al.*, 1981), the family (Gerbner *et al.*, 1980), educational achievement and aspirations (Morgan & Gross, 1982), politics (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan

¹²⁴ The review of Cultivation Analysis here heavily relies on two more recent and apparently complete and refined references by the founders of the theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1986; and various articles in Signorielli & Morgan, 1990 specially Chapter 1 by Morgan & Signorielli). Beyond the reason of simplicity, this is to avoid possible theoretical misunderstandings that may occur due to use of un-refined and controversial discussion in the numerous early writings.

& Signorielli, 1982, 1984), religion (Gerbner *et al.*, 1984), and many other issues (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 22; Morgan & Signorielli, 1990: 16).

Television; the Cultivating Medium

The Cultivation theory holds that television increasingly has become an appliance, a storyteller and a member of the family. Yet, these functions still continues to develop as the new television delivery systems (e.g., Cable TV, DBS, and VCRs) are well developing and as the saturation and viewing time continues to increase. The medium is the main “source of the most broadly shared images and messages in the history” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 17). Television is the main channel of interrelationships between individuals and their ‘imagined, symbolic environment’ (society) in which they are members. The medium is the primary and centralised system of storytelling in that it is present in every individual’s everyday life and it is “telling most of the stories to most of the people most of the times”. Television illuminates “the invisible relationships of life and society” and, thus, “cultivates from infancy the very predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other sources” (Ibid.: 18).

The medium serves the functions of other socialising institutions such as school, family, and religion. As Gerbner *et al.* (1986) believe, “television provides, perhaps for the first time since preindustrial religion, a daily ritual of highly compelling and informative content that forms a strong cultural link between elites and the rest of the population. The heart of the analogy of television and religion, and the similarity of their social functions, lies in the continual repetition of patterns (myths, ideologies, “facts,” relationships, etc.), which serve to define the world and legitimise the social order” (p. 18). Cultivation theory focuses on the total pattern of television content since it believes that television content, although it consists of various genres and types, presents a relatively homogenous and stable current of images and messages about the ‘social world’. In the modern society, the common and homogenous content of television is the common source of socialisation and information of an otherwise heterogeneous population. According to the Cultivation theory, for instance as Gerbner *et al.* (1986) argue, “television differs from other media [i.e., print and film] in its centralised mass production and ritualistic use of a coherent set of images and messages produced for

total populations. Therefore, exposure to the total pattern rather than only to specific genres or programs is what accounts for the historically new and distinct consequences of living with television, namely, the cultivation of shared conceptions of reality among otherwise diverse publics” (p19).

Cultivation by Television and Media Effects Research

The cultivation researchers hold that the distinctive features and the wider social implications of television can not be understood properly by the theoretical models and methodological paradigms of the traditional individualistic, short-term, attitude change research. The Cultivation Analysis departs from the traditional effects models since it concentrates on the “massive, long-term, and common exposure of large and heterogeneous publics to centrally produced, mass distributed, and repetitive systems of stories” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 20). In other words, cultivation researchers do not deny the importance of intervening factors of media effects studied in other theories - such as distinct impact of particular media genres, selective exposure and perception of the audience, and the role of individual and group differences. The theory stresses that exclusive concentration on these factors carries the risk of underestimating or even losing the significant feature of television. As the medium of the age, the significance of television lies in the fact that it “provides a relatively restricted set of choices for a virtually unrestricted variety of interests and publics” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 19).

Cultivation Analysis differs from the traditional effects theories in other ways. It holds that the main impact of television must be studied in terms of its role in the gradual, cumulative, and life-long process of socialisation and enculturation, that partially means the “absorption of divergent currents into a stable and common mainstream” (Ibid.: 20). Cultivation theory conceptualises the unique role of television in the socialisation process and the continuity of social structure. The theory assumes that stable and restricted television content in the long-term affects the divergent segments of the population. The presumptions of the Cultivation Analysis are clearly based on different definitions of the term ‘effects’. The cultivation process is, as the researchers argue, television’s contribution to the composition and structure of social reality (that is, in itself, a symbolic environment) and, thus, it does not necessarily imply

a one-way, monolithic process (see, e.g., Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 23). In other words, Cultivation Analysis does not believe in direct effects of the medium on its audience, rather it views the interrelationship between the two components of mass communications 'process'. As the founders of the theory express, it assumes a continuous, interactive process between the medium and its publics from cradle to grave and so takes into consideration various variables of demographic, social, personal, and cultural contexts (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 23).

Cultural Analysis concentrates on the role of television within the wider socio-cultural context. This shows a departure from the more simplistic and deterministic views of the effects models that believed in media effects without taking into account the contextual factors. The theory tends to decrease television's importance as the mere factor of any kind of change or reaffirmation. This is done by considering the nature of mass communications process and the limited role of media organisations. "Thus, television neither simply creates nor reflects images, opinions, and beliefs. Rather, it is an integral aspect of a dynamic process. Institutional needs and objectives influence the creation and distribution of mass produced messages which create, fit into, exploit, and sustain the needs, values, and ideologies of mass publics. These publics, in turn, acquire distinct identities as publics partly through exposure to the ongoing flow of messages" (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 23).

It is worth here to note that the theory, since it focuses on the accumulated total exposure of divergent audiences to stable messages, does not expect remarkable quantitative differences between the heavy and light viewers. It concludes that the discovery of a systematic pattern of even small but pervasive (e.g., generational) shift in the cultivation of opinions or values may in fact transform the socio-cultural balance and order. "A range of 3% to 15% margins (typical of our cultivation differentials¹²⁵) in a large and otherwise stable field often signals a landslide, a market take-over, or an epidemic, and it certainly tips the scale of any closely balanced choice or decision. Cultivation theory is based on the persistent and pervasive pull of the television

¹²⁵ A 'cultivation differential' is the (margin of) difference between the perceptions of heavy and light viewers in the same social subgroup on a particular aspect of social reality (see, e.g., Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; and Watson & Hill, 1993: 43).

mainstream on a great variety of currents and countercurrents” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 21).

Cultivation Process

Cultivation theory defines the media, particularly television, as the mainstream of the symbolic world of society (*and* culture). It is assumed that television content, although to varying degrees, dominates the sources of information for the vast majority of the population. Yet, television (re)presents a stable image through its apparently varied programmes such as news, dramas, sports, etc. The medium represents the ideology of contemporary cultures or, in other words, it constitutes the ideological arm of modern socio-political structures. Briefly speaking, Cultivation Analysis is concerned with (1) cumulative correlates and consequences of long-term exposure of (2) diverse sub-groups of the public to (3) the stable images and messages persistent in otherwise various programmes, episodes, series, or genres (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Morgan & Signorielli, 1990). The main ‘effect’ of long-term exposure to television content, therefore, could be confirmed if heavy-viewers tend to perceive the ‘real world’ in ways that reflect the ‘television world’ compared to light-viewers.

Television acts as an independent contributor in the process of socialisation *and* enculturation. The process itself is complex and life-long and, thus, the distinction between the two overlapping phenomena is artificial. “In short, the aspects of the process that are more like socialisation relate to the specific patterns of thought and action. The facets that are more like enculturation impinge on becoming human” (Gross & Morgan, 1985). Television content can “shape,” “nourish,” and “cultivate” new values and ideals in its audiences *and/or* it may “reinforce,” “reiterate,” and “confirm” their existing perceptions (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Morgan & Signorielli, 1990). However, the theory does not exclude the possibility of a change of values or attitudes. In fact, it implies that “the ‘independent contribution’ of television viewing [means] quite specifically that the generation (in some) and maintenance (in others) of some set of outlooks or beliefs can be traced to steady, cumulative exposure to the world of television” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 24). The theory argues that the amount of television viewing is an indicator of individual’s immersion in the cultural mainstream which in

modern society is, indeed, shaped, maintained, and mass-cultivated by the ideologically stable content of television. This process is called *mainstreaming*. Cultivation theory by this term “implies the steady entrenchment of mainstream orientations in most cases and the systematic but almost imperceptible modification of previous orientations in others; in other words, affirmation for the believers *and* indoctrination for deviants” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 24; emphasis in original).

It was suggested that Cultivation Analysis is not based on unidirectional presumptions and focuses on the continual, ongoing process of interactions among/between media (messages, content, world) and its audiences (viewer, context). The final outcome of the process is believed to be gradual (and increasing) convergence of the perceptions of the (more heavier) viewers toward the ‘television world’ away from the ‘real, social world’. The theory, therefore, consists of two steps in which the primary step is an analysis of media content. Most of the empirical evidence to support the theory has been collected in the United States by Gerbner and his associates. Here, some of the findings of media message analysis and their cultivating impacts are presented.

Gerbner and his associates in their annual analysis of ‘message systems’ of prime time and weekend daytime television programmes since 1969 have found several persistent discrepancies between television world and real world (see, e.g., Gross & Morgan, 1985; Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Morgan & Signorielli, 1990). In the world of US television, media characters tend to be white, young, male, and well-off. Women are outnumbered by men by at least 3:1 and are younger but age faster than men, and hold narrower range of opportunities. Young people make up one-third and older people only one-fifth of their true proportion in the population. Minorities also are represented disproportionately. For instance, blacks and Hispanics are represented respectively three-fourths and one-third of their share of the whole population. The well-to-do middle class white males are overrepresented. The dominant white males are more likely to commit crimes while young, female, old, and minorities are more likely to be victimised. Crime dominates television (particularly prime time) programmes at a rate at least ten times more than the real world, and on an average of five to six acts of physical violence per hour.

Cultivation Analysis; modes, variations

Cultivation studies go one step farther to study the impact of television viewing on the audiences. Using standard methods and techniques, they try to determine whether differences occur in the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of light, medium, and heavy viewers and, if so, how much is attributable to their amounts of viewing. The margins of difference (i.e., “cultivation differentials”) between answers provided by various groups of viewers define the extent of cultivation: the more “television answers”, the more the amount of cultivation (e.g., Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 27; Morgan & Signorielli, 1990: 20).

The statistical differences between the television world and the real world, the theory argues, are significant. The differences lie in the fact that the former convey particular messages on power, dominance, victimisation, and segregation which differ from those in the real world. These underlying messages represent the mainstream values, ideology, and power relationships which have been consistent during the decades of television’s presence. Yet, the repetitive messages of cultural amplification or neglect instil relatively restrictive and intolerant views regarding social groups, personal morality and freedoms, women’s roles, and minority rights (Ibid.).

Various studies have found that heavy-viewers’ answers reflect a television version of reality, showing some clear-cut differences between the symbolic reality (learnt from television) and the factual world. For example, Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli & Morgan (1980) reported that television cultivates negative images of the elderly. They suggested that heavy viewers are more likely to feel that the elderly, compared to 20 years ago, are fewer in number, are unhealthy and in worse shape financially, closed-minded, and do not live as long. Also, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli (1980) and Gerbner *et al.* (1979) argued that heavy exposure to the violent world of prime time television cultivates exaggerated perceptions of the number of people involved in violence and numerous inaccurate beliefs about crime and law enforcement.

It is argued that the biased and distorted world of television is a basis for the broader world views of the audiences, “thus making television a significant source of general values, ideologies, and perspectives as well as specific assumptions, beliefs, and images” (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 28). This is called cultivation of “value systems” (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982) or second-order cultivation (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986). Various

studies, Cultivation researchers claim, demonstrate television's potential to cultivate particular (mainstream) values and beliefs in areas including crime and law, sex- and age-stereotypes, minority status, health, science, the family, educational achievement and aspirations, politics, religion and alike.

For instance, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli (1980) argue that heavy exposure of viewers to heavy doses of violence-saturated programmes of television instils mistrust, apprehension, danger, and exaggerated "mean world" perceptions. The latter, called '*mean world syndrome*', refers to the belief that the world is mean and dangerous, and most of the people can not be trusted since they are selfish and are just looking out for themselves. Similarly, Cultivation researchers have discovered a significant relationship between heavy television viewing and political socialisation. The studies (e.g., Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1982; 1984) stress that television content, in order to attract large and heterogeneous audiences and, therefore, to avoid disturbing viewers, attempt to balance opposing political perspectives and steer a middle course along the supposedly safe and non-ideological mainstream. This, it is claimed, explains why heavy viewers substantially label themselves as being politically moderate rather than either "liberal" or "conservative".

'Cultivation Relativity'

The theory accepts that television is neither the single agent of socialisation and enculturation nor is it the only factor behind the domination of particular beliefs and value systems. As Gerbner and his associates frequently have suggested (see, e.g., Gross & Morgan, 1985; Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; and Morgan & Signorielli, 1990), various demographic, social, family, and personal characteristics, factors, and processes influence the shape and degree of the cultivating ability of television viewing. In the words of Gerbner *et al.*, (1986: 29-30) "television viewing usually relates in different but consistent ways to different groups' life situations and world views". Again to give some examples one may mention the influence of personal interaction, direct experience, age, and sex.

Gross & Morgan (1985) found that higher parental involvement in, and orientations toward, their children's television viewing can decrease the cultivation

influence of the medium on their children. Rothschild (1984) has argued that higher integration of children into cohesive peer groups decreases their vulnerability to television cultivation. Other findings point out that the relationship between the amount of viewing and fear of crime is stronger among those who live in high crime urban areas and so their everyday real experiences are congruent with television violence. This phenomenon, called *resonance* in Cultivation theory, implies that the similarity of everyday reality and television content provides a double dose of messages that resonate and amplify cultivation (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980; Morgan, 1983). As referred to earlier, Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli & Morgan (1980) reported that young viewers are more vulnerable to television's negative portrayals of the elderly. In another study Morgan & Gross (1980) discovered that the negative relationships among television viewing, IQ, and school achievement are stronger for boys compared to the girls of the same age and grade.

Another term which cultivation researchers have coined is *mainstreaming*. The mainstream (of American culture) is a "relative commonality of outlooks and values that heavy exposure to the features and dynamics of the television world tends to cultivate [...] Mainstreaming means that television viewing may absorb or override differences in perspectives and behaviour that stem from other social, cultural, and demographic influences. It represents a homogenisation of divergent views and a convergence of disparate viewers. Mainstreaming makes television the true 20th-century melting pot of the American people." (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 30-31).

Criticism

The Cultural Indicators project has been criticised widely. During the 1970s various critics voiced concern over definitions, findings, and methodological issues of message system analysis.¹²⁶ Also, the theoretical, methodological, and epistemological claims and presumptions of Cultivation Analysis have been broadly re-examined and criticised. Newcomb (1978) pointed to the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches and questioned the usefulness of Cultivation methods in studying long-term, qualitative impacts of mass media. He also raised doubts about the

¹²⁶ For a list of critics see Morgan & Signorielli (1990: 23-24).

alternative interpretations of television messages by the audiences. A research conducted by Wober (1978) failed to show the cultivation impact of television viewing in the United Kingdom similar to those studied in the United States.¹²⁷ It was claimed that the research merely refers to the cultural and institutional differences between the two contexts (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1979). However, the early 1980s witnessed strong controversies between critics such as P.M. Hirsch (1980, 1981a, 1981b) and M. Hughes (1980), and Gerbner and his associates. Here, some of the critical discussions are elaborated briefly.

Hirsch (1980, 1981) claimed that most of the relationships between television viewing and opinions about social reality disappear when multiple controls (age, sex, education, etc.) are applied simultaneously. Similarly, Hughes (1980) reanalysed the same data used by Gerbner and his associates, included variables ignored in their study (e.g., race and church attendance), and applied simultaneous controls for extraneous variables. He concluded that his findings do not support cultivation theory as described by Gerbner and others. However, according to Hughes (1980: 300), “it could be that cultivation theory is correct, but that the analytical procedures used by Gerbner and his associates are incapable of uncovering such an effect because total exposure to television does not specifically tap what people who watch are exposed to. [Thus,] cultivation theory is a gross oversimplification of how television affects behaviour through culture”.

DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989) say that Cultivation analysis adds new terms to refer to the traditional idea of media effects and, thus, it is “a reinvention with new labels for [a] well-established theoretical wheel” (p. 264). In spite of these views, however, media scholars such as DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989: 264), and McQuail (1994: 366) believe that Cultivation theory seems to improve our understanding from the media effects on construction of meanings, reality-perception, and on-going socialisation of individuals.

¹²⁷ The apparent failure of Cultivation theory is not limited to the United Kingdom. In some other countries similar results have been reported. For instance, Doob & McDonald (1979) refer to the failure of the theory in the Canadian context.

Current Developments

Lively debates have led to refinements and overall development of Cultivation Analysis approach. Researchers have examined additional intervening variables and have discovered new processes. Morgan & Signorielli (1990: 26-29) provide a list of challenges faced by the approach. These questions include psychological processes and cognitive mechanisms of cultivation; more vulnerable subgroups to television; the role of interpersonal and family relations; levels of cultivation; the role of personal experience; the influence of viewers' orientations toward television; the cultivation of particular programmes and genres; cultivation by other media than television; the impact of new communications technologies; cultivation in other countries and so on. These questions have been challenged by members of the Cultural Indicators project and various independent researchers since the early 1980s. For instance, cultivation of particular genres, and not exposure to overall television content, has been the focus of some studies. In particular, the cultivation potential of soap operas has been investigated by Buerkel-Rothfuss & Mayes (1981) and Perse (1986).¹²⁸

It seems that these developments increasingly blur the barriers between Cultivation theory and other theories of media/audience interrelationships such as uses and gratification, cultural imperialism and interpretative audience approaches. However, the main question in the present research involves two of the above-mentioned development directions; namely cultivation impact of (1) foreign media in a given context (2) through the new technology of videocassette recorders (VCRs). Therefore, here I focus on applicability of Cultivation Analysis for VCR environment and theoretical consequences of selective exposure of audiences to (domestic and/or foreign) 'video' content through VCRs.

Cultivation Analysis in VCR Environment

One of the main characteristics of the Cultivation theory in the 1970s and 1980s was its concern with overall, total exposure to 'fixed', 'pre-scheduled' and over-the-air television broadcasting. But, videocassette recorders (VCR) enable people to be

¹²⁸ For detailed discussions on the most recent developments in Cultivation theory see various articles in Signorielli & Morgan (1990).

selective and to watch what they want and when they want to watch. This feature of VCRs presents Cultivation theory with a new challenge; Does VCR use diversify or intensify the television use of relatively nonselective audiences? In other words, does VCR “amplify or fragment the cultivation of dominant conceptions of social reality?” (Morgan, Shanahan & Harris, 1990).

It has been widely claimed that VCR is able to both intensify and/or diversify viewers’ ‘video diets’. VCRs enable the viewers to escape from the centralised content of standardised television channels by using a video set for recording desired programmes over-the-air and viewing them repeatedly (time-shifting). This results in intensification of exposure to mainstream television content, although selectivity of VCR owners increases compared to the relative nonselective audiences of traditional television. On the other hand, VCRs enable audiences to access material ‘different’ from the mainstream content by viewing pre-recorded programmes not provided (absolutely or to the desired extent) on the conventional channels (diversification) (see, Chapter 2 for detailed discussion; also, Dobrow, 1990).

However, the diversification or intensification potential of VCRs depend on whether viewers in a given society or subgroup utilise their sets to view material culturally and ideologically similar to the dominant content of mainstream (national?) television. Here, one may argue that to the extent that video cassettes and television content are similar, the expected cultivation impacts of the mainstream cultural instrument may intensify (Dobrow, 1989). In other words, if the material viewed through VCRs is dissimilar to the dominant television content, the possibility for the occurrence of expected cultivation impacts of television will diminish. In this case, another hypotheses may be suggested to convey that, the different material of the VCR market could cultivate different perceptions and values (discussed below). In short, VCR technology has the potential to provide the users the ability to “select” similar and/or different media content. Thus, viewers can diversify or intensify their media use or even achieve a mixture of both. This primarily challenges one of the basic presumptions of early Cultivation Analysis approach - that is, viewers use television relatively nonselectively.

Another indication of VCR technology for Cultivation theory is that, according to some research (e.g., Murray & White, 1987), VCR owners tend to watch more television overall. The subsequent increased commitment of audience to “video entertainment,” compared to other forms of pass-time, may strengthen or weaken the amount of cultivation impacts of the mainstream television. The direction of VCRs’ influence depends on the extent to which VCR is used for viewing mainstream or non-mainstream content (see also Dobrow, 1989).

VCR environment has other implications for the cultivation presumptions. It has been reported that (Dobrow, 1990) heavier television viewers in the United States are more likely to use their VCRs to intensify their viewing patterns of domestic (American) programmes, while the lighter viewers tend to diversify their viewing. This shows that VCR is more likely to amplify the cultivation impact for heavy viewers. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that abundant evidence reveals that in the developing media-poor countries, where the audiences feel deprived of diversified media content, VCRs are utilised essentially for re-playing pre-recorded material (e.g., Straubhaar & Lin, 1989). Also, as discussed elsewhere in detail (see Chapter 2), VCR in the developing media-poor countries appeared as a rival for the mainstream television and cinema. Many scholars (see, e.g., Straubhaar & Lent, 1989; Ogan, 1989; Schoenbach & Becker, 1989) conclude that in media-rich countries VCR is generally used for time-shifting while in the media-poor countries it is utilised for playing otherwise scarce or restricted material. But, it complements the existing media channels in the developed media-rich nations and provides material similar to that of mainstream broadcast. These issues point to the fact that the international context of media content is not unified and, therefore, similar cultivation impact could not be expected. This is true particularly when a technology such as VCR enables audiences to continuously expose themselves selectively and, therefore, to diversify their consumption patterns.

International Cultivation Analysis

Cultivation Analysis in the beginning focused on the impact of domestic television programmes within the American society. Later and since the early 1980s, numerous studies were carried out on cultivation of domestic and foreign (more extensively

American) television programmes in other countries (such as England, the Netherlands, Korea, Sweden, Germany, and Australia¹²⁹). Most of these studies have failed to replicate the findings in the United States. This led many critics as well as cultivation researchers to conclude that “cultivation is highly culture specific. If a particular message system (and culture) contains a great deal of (for example) violence, then the media system of that society should cultivate corresponding conceptions; if it does not, then it should not. The fact that U.S. television is dominated by (and cultivates) a particular set of images of violence, sex roles, occupation, aging, health, social power, minorities, and so on, does not mean that other countries’ television systems, which may or may not disseminate similar images, cultivate similar views” (Morgan, 1990: 226-227).

In the context of cross-cultural communications, “international cultivation analysis is conceptually and politically linked with arguments and debates concerning cultural imperialism” (Morgan, 1990: 227). The pioneers of cultural imperialism approach (e.g., Schiller, 1976; Tunstall, 1977) have argued that extensive imports of American television productions are subjecting the world to ‘homogenisation’ and ‘Americanisation’. Nevertheless, empirical evidence to suggest that imported American programmes have had, and will continue to have, some impact on attitudes and behaviours of host countries’ populations are very scarce and problematic. This has been due to lack of applicable theoretical framework as well as methodological difficulties (Boyd, 1984). Cultivation analysis seems to provide a possible - albeit partial - solution for the problem. Here some of the studies and their findings are summarised.¹³⁰

Pingree & Hawkins (1981) found that the amount of exposure of Australian students to U.S. programmes (especially crime and adventure programmes) is significantly related to their scores on indexes of *Mean World* and *Violence in Society*. They also unexpectedly discovered that American television content (50% to 70% of Australian screen time) was a more important factor in the students’ conceptions of Australian society than domestic productions. Yet, the students’ images of American society were irrelevant to the amount of their viewing of American programmes. This finding is against the usual assumption that media effects will be greater in the absence

¹²⁹ For a list and summary of the findings of these studies see Morgan (1990: 229-232).

¹³⁰ For some examples see various case studies in Melischek; Rosengren & Stappers (1984).

of direct information. This assumption, on the other hand, has been tested and confirmed in other studies. Weimann (1984) found that heavy viewers of American programmes in Israel (60% to 65% of television content) had an idealised image of life in the U.S. in terms of wealth, standard of living, and material possessions.

Wober (1978) found that the British case with 15% of U.S. programmes does not support cultivation in terms of images of violence. Later Wober (1990: 220-221) concluded that several subsequent research in Britain during the 1980s confirm that “the overall indications of these studies are of weak and patchy associations. Among children there are further implications of cultivation possibilities, where viewing may reinforce developing strands of aspiration and of personality”.

Studies in the Netherlands (Bouwman, 1984) found a very weak correlation between the amount of television viewing and perceptions of violence, victimisation, and mistrust. This was attributed to some characteristics of the Dutch context and the fact that most of the imported American content are mainly comedies and love stories and not violence-saturated crime dramas (Bouwman & Stappers, 1984). In Sweden, Hedinsson & Windahl (1984) found some consistent associations between attitudes and amount of exposure and concluded that cultivation impacts should be studied through uses and gratification measures.

More recent studies have investigated the contributions of domestic and imported television content in the socio-cultural context of other societies more different from the United States. For example, Kang & Morgan (1988) have studied the cultivation potential of imported American programmes as channels of ‘Westernisation’ of South Korean society. They argue that American television content presents some sharp deviations from traditional Korean values concerning ‘proper’ gender-roles, familial values, and respect for parents and elders. They found that exposure to American content is associated with more ‘liberal’ perspectives among female college students; the heavier exposure of female audiences, the lesser their acceptance of traditional values (of, for instance, piety, and arranged marriage), and, on the other hand, the more acceptance of Western fashions such as jeans and rock n’ roll music. Male respondents showed cultivation of different perceptions; the heavier exposure of male students to American content, the greater hostility toward the United States, and the greater sensitivity and protectiveness toward

Korean culture. Morgan (1990) believes that the case of Korean male students suggests a “backlash” effect of American programmes at least among some sectors of foreign audiences, that is an increase in anti-American emotions and a rise in nationalistic cultural consciousness.

These differing, if not contradictory, findings point to some implications for international cultivation theory. Cultivation theory and its methodology are based on an underlying presumption that different genres or programmes of media are merely various expressions of the same values and ideologies. Therefore, exposure to overall undifferentiated content is what is important. But, as Wober suggests in the case of Britain, “television content and consumption is composed of quite diverse atoms [that is, genres and programmes, and not of] essentially similar atoms.” Therefore, “thematic consequences of the kind described by American cultivation analysts” cannot be expected (Wober, 1990: 209). Another conclusion of Wober, also, seems to be plausible in the contexts of other countries. He argues that the British experience reveals that “content should be studied in terms of audience perceptions of that content” and, therefore, a “selective viewing” theory is more plausible than a television-effects explanation of cultivation associations (Wober, 1990: 207). These findings point out the fact that the complex interrelationship between television and its audiences must be understood in terms of media potential, audience perceptions of the media and content, and audiences selectivity and involvement. The role of audiences in the *process of media-culture/society* relationship is elaborated in the notion of audience activity.

Audience Activity

The term audience, despite its common use in media studies, has been and still is problematic. Originally an old term, the notion of audience has developed into one, though controversial, component of mass communication process and research. Here it seems that a fair understanding of the notion of ‘audience activity’ requires a brief elaboration of the connotative meanings of the term audience.

Blumer (1939) believes that conditions of modern society have created a new form of collectivity, different from older social formations of group, crowd, and public. He calls the new form ‘mass’ which is large, widely dispersed, anonymous, and lacks self-

awareness. This definition of mass audience regards media receivers as nonselective and passive atoms of the calculative mess of society. This mass audience is receiver (consumer) of mass media content and, in fact, has no power upon the powerful media, its content, and its practitioners (McQuail, 1994).

The atomistic notion of mass audience was challenged during the 1940s and 1950s by researchers such as Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955). Research developed new theoretical formulations, retrospectively labelled as Uses and Gratifications approach and two-step flow of communication theory. These theories emphasised the role of social group and interpersonal communications and influence among the media audiences. However, the two media-oriented and audience-centred perspective of media receivers have remained simultaneously since the revival of the notion of the faceless and manipulable mass audience in the 1970s, although the latter prevails. In addition, the phrase 'mass media audience' currently refers to various formations originated either in society or in media - such as the social group, the gratification set, the fan group or taste culture, and/or channel or medium audience (see McQuail, 1994: 288-292).

These two ideal types seem to disagree, among other things, on the significance of the audience's role in the communication process. The pessimistic, atomistic notion believes in passivity of the audience, while the optimistic, social-cultural approach attributes, less or more, activity to media audiences. The notion of an active audience has been widely, but by no means exclusively, developed within the theoretical paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s which is retrospectively called Uses and Gratifications theory. Researchers such as Lasswell (1948), Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch (1974) insisted on a powerful role of cognitive variables and subcultures in the process of audience-media interrelationships. According to this perspective, audiences are selective in their media attention and purposefully aim to fulfil some need and finally gain some gratifications from their media use. Blumler (1979) believed that selective attendance of audiences, holding a central position in the Uses and Gratifications paradigm, conditions the actual received media effects by the amount of audience selection and involvement in the process of media use.

Blumler (1979) argued that the notion of an active audience is complex and, therefore, should be treated as an intervening variable, and not as an absolute factor in

media consumption and effects. He identified various dimensions of the concept as including: *selectivity* (prior interests and desires which affect communication choices and planning); *intentionality* (prior motivations or expectations which direct communication behaviour); *viewing attention* (cognitive activity that affect media-use during exposure); *utility* (the uses audiences have for communication); and *imperviousness to influence* (resistance against unwanted influence and the notion of 'obstinate audience'). The latter dimension, also classified as *resistance to influence* by Biocca (1988), elaborates the notion of 'obstinate audience' (Bauer, 1964). It emphasises that audiences, though they might not always be very selective in attention, are selective in their perceptions and have some power to limit unwanted influence.

Obviously, all dimensions of audience activity have not attracted equal attention. This may be partially due to the fact that activity varies in regard to the kind of medium and the audiences involved. In Blumler's words, "some media might invite more, or less, audience activity than others" (1979: 13). Yet, since media research has mainly concentrated on television, three dimensions of utility, intentionality, and selectivity have gained more theoretical significance than the other meanings of activeness (Rubin, 1986). These three types of activity reflect an audience member's cognitive, affective, and behavioural selective involvement with the media consumption. Furthermore, extending Blumler's classification, Levy & Windahl (1984, 1985) suggested a typology of the three main activity types (utility, intentionality, and selectivity) across three activity periods - previewing, during viewing, and postviewing.

As suggested earlier, audience activity is a variable. This means that the degree of activity varies when the media use motives of the audiences are treated as interrelated structures. In other words, as Rubin & Rubin (1982) suggest, 'instrumental' media use reflects greater audience activity (utility, intentionality, and selectivity), compared to 'ritualistic' media use. The former means seeking certain media content for information or other goal-directed reasons, whereas the latter refers to habitual media use for reasons such as filling time or for diversionary purposes. Also, it has been argued, e.g., Windahl (1981), that the degree of audience activity, interrelated with instrumental or ritualistic media use, influences the final effects received from the media. Rubin (1984) elaborates on this idea and believes that instrumental television use is significantly positively related to perceptions of television realism, while ritualistic or habitual

watching increases dependency to, and affinity with, the medium. The two media attitudes of “affinity and realism may also serve as attitudinal predispositions that filter mass media and message selection and use” (Rubin, 1986: 294) and even media effects.

Audience Activity in VCR Environment

It is well known that VCR is a technology that facilitates audiences’ more purposeful, ‘instrumental’ video use. VCR viewing is more goal-oriented and reflects intentional selection (Rubin & Bantz, 1987). It also provides greater control over content selection and viewing scheduling (Kim, Baran & Massey, 1988). In brief, “VCR technology allows the audience more choice, participation, and control” (Rubin & Bantz, 1987: 472). This potential of VCR create an environment of visual (video) media consumption in which the notion of audience activity is challenged, refined, and even re-defined. Studies of audience activity in VCR environment have improved both the theoretical stand of the active audience postulation and the understanding of VCR as a new communications medium.

A noticeable number of studies have investigated various dimensions of audience activity (usually simplified as three elements of selectivity, involvement, and utility) in three dimensions of time (before, during, and after exposure). The typology of activities becomes more complicated when one includes various categories of VCR uses (i.e., time-shifting, pre-recorded tape viewing, video library building, and replaying home movies). However, different studies for methodological reasons focus on either dimensions of audience activity or activities relevant to one of the main VCR uses. For instance, Rubin & Bantz (1987) focus on utility dimension activity, while Krugman & Johnson (1991) elaborate on the movie rental-related activities of the VCR audience. Thus, the research findings are numerous, complicated, and cross-correlated. Here, some findings are discussed briefly.¹³¹

According to Rubin & Bantz (1987) time-shifting activity may enhance interpersonal communication because more convenient timing viewing schedule enables the audience members to watch the recording together. The socialisation or

¹³¹ For a detailed discussion see Rubin & Bantz (1987, 1989); Lin (1990); Krugman & Johnson (1991); among many others.

interpersonal communication may also increase before, during, and after viewing family or rental movies (Harvey & Rothe, 1986). Regardless of the VCR use purpose, pausing (zapping) of commercial or any other undesired content during recording and fast-forwarding (zipping) during playbacks are two important activities of VCR audiences. The audience gains higher degree of control over the content of standard over-the-air broadcasting program and rental cassettes (Yorke & Kitchen, 1985).

Rubin & Bantz (1987), studying the VCR utilities in the U.S., found that VCR users are “active communicators who make decisions based on the perceived utility of those choices” (p. 482). They also confirmed the activeness of VCR audiences since the technology provides further possibility for individual differences. In other words, different audience groups use VCRs for different purposes and so they view different content.¹³² The VCR audience are selective, show higher intentionality, make more decisions regarding the content and viewing context, and have more interpersonal communications. The study found that “[t]he structure of motives to use VCRs is similar to television use, yet even more goal-oriented. For example, VCR use reflects intentional selection of preferred types of programs (e.g., movies, music videos). Also, there are more instrumental than ritualistic components to VCR use” (p. 483).

Lin (1990) in a study of an American sample assumed that recording and replaying, as well as commercial pausing and zipping are part of the overall audience activity paradigm. The study found that video rental dominates VCR use and audiences have become more ‘home-bound’. Therefore, the audiences’ active use of the VCR medium “seems to imply an ever-growing trend of home entertainment or the formation of a home video culture” (p. 87). She also noted that VCR audiences are “involved with improving their viewing conditions during exposure” and also are selective in making decisions for both content and context of viewing (p. 88). Furthermore, according to Lin, these audience activities alter regular television viewing schedules. The research also found that many VCR users utilised their viewing experience for interpersonal communication purposes during and after exposure, implying that active VCR users are cognitively and affectively as well as behaviourally involved with the program content.

¹³² The activity of various audience groups are elaborated in other studies. For instance Roe (1987) studies adolescents’ video use and Dobrow (1989) discusses ethnic minorities’ video use pattern in the United States.

Conclusion

The question of media effects has a long history in mass media research. However, the final answer has always been that of 'relativity.' The early media studies attributed magical and needle-like effects to the media, while the orientations afterwards denied such absolute impact and, therefore, relativised the effects of media on audiences. This relativity has been achieved by taking into account, on the one hand, psychological and social differences between members of the audience and, on the other, the differences between various mass media and media content genres.

Out of the numerous media effects formulations, two theories were discussed in this chapter as the theoretical rationale of this research: the Cultivation Analysis and the notion of audience activity. These theories have been chosen because of their outstanding applicability with the aims of this research which involves the effectiveness of long-term exposure of Iranian adolescents to foreign content through VCRs. Among the existing theories, Cultivation Analysis is more able to deal with the impact of long-term exposure to media content. Although it has been criticised for misinterpreting research findings and also not being limited to the United States, Cultivation theory (and its research method) is conditionally applicable in international contexts. The theory simply holds that heavier exposure to media content cultivates particular attitudes, perceptions and values in the audiences which do not necessarily correspond to the real world. New developments have made this theory more compatible with other theories. This has increased the theory's applicability particularly when the question of the impact of (a) foreign media content (b) through VCRs is considered.

This research does not focus on the content of national television and so the mainstreaming impact can not be defined at the national level. This is because the VCR market in Iran is dominated by content (imported or the pre-revolutionary domestic products) which are considered officially as well as by many sectors of the public as contrary to the national culture. The opposition is very sharp from the viewpoint of the official religious culture which dominates national media content. However, the impact of the 'different but popular' content of VCR can be studied satisfactorily by using Cultivation theory in conjunction with the notion of audience activity. This combination has been made in the light of the fact that VCR has been a crucial factor in activation of

audiences. The notion of audience activity, developed into rejective (obstinate) and acceptive audiences, is closely associated with instrumental and ritualistic types of the audiences' media uses. Also closely related to the notion of personal activity, parental control (mediation and rule-making) is studied here since the VCR has presumably increased the need for more direct control by parents on their children and adolescents' video uses. These notions are further discussed and developed in chapters 8 and 9.

Chapter VII

Methodology

This chapter reflects on methodological procedures followed in the quantitative section of this research. It seems necessary to remind that this section studies mainly the impact of VCRs, as a new medium, on media uses and also the long-term cultivation effects of available videocassettes within Iranian society. Thus, I discuss the general limitations of this survey research as contrasted to other, possibly more favourable, methods. The chapter, then, continues with discussions on particular hypotheses, structure of questionnaire and relevant measurement scales, sample and sampling, various difficulties faced in the field, and other topics.

Research Rationale

This study is *an exploratory-explanatory, cross-sectional survey research on potential (cultivation) effects of VCRs in Iranian society*. I have used questionnaires for gathering data from high school students and their parents. The data gathering was accomplished in Tehran between December 1994 and March 1995.

A Cross-Sectional Survey Research

The present study uses *survey* methodology. It follows the procedures of surveys and hence, to some extent, it benefits from the advantages and suffers from the disadvantages of survey methodology. Here, a brief review of the general features of survey research as well as its applicability in the media effects studies can shed some light on what this research *can* and what it *cannot* describe and explain. Survey collects information by asking people questions using two primary modes of questionnaire and interview. The collected data, generally numerical, is suitable for statistical analysis.

Surveys can be used for the aims of description, exploration, and explanation. They can describe and explain issues related to attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs as well as more objective structural formations. They can also test certain theories which suggest hypothesised causal or correlational relationships between various types of variables. The numerical survey results can be analysed by statistical methods of uni-, bi- and multivariate descriptive, multiple correlation and regression, and path analysis (see, e.g., Baker 1988).

However, in spite of their popularity in social research, survey studies suffer from some limitations. They can only address a set of questions which respondents can understand, and for which they can remember and are willing to give answers. Furthermore, in the design and administration of a survey numerous problems must be considered such as the type and language of the questions, the choice between questionnaire and interview, the structure of questionnaire or interview schedules, selection of a representative sample, access to respondents, and the proper techniques of data analysis and so on. The relevant arrangements adopted in this research to avoid and minimise the limitations of this survey are discussed in the next section of this chapter entitled Research Procedures.

An Effects Research

As many researchers have discussed, research on mass media effects is still a tremendously difficult task. Many contemporary writers on media effects confirm this point.¹³³ This difficulty can be attributed to the shortcomings of theoretical formulations, an underdevelopment of proper methodological designs, and a lack of an appropriate understanding of various socio-cultural contexts. The latter, inevitably, leads us to 'contextualisation' of media (text) consumption and to acceptance of multiplicity of audience readings of media (see, e.g., Chaffee, 1992). Theoretically, current formulations cover only a limited number of intervening variables and a synthetic theory is yet undeveloped. Methodologically, as Chaffee (1992) states, media effects research lacks paradigmatic models and both the most popular effects designs, the controlled

¹³³ For example, see various articles in Blumler, McLeod & Rosengren (1992), Bryant & Zillmann (1986) and Korzeny & Ting-Toomey (1992).

experiment and the correlational survey, do not serve very well for different reasons. This problem multiplies in the field of international communication research that investigates the effects of foreign media content across cultures (that is within another socio-cultural context). Such a study, as Korzeny and Schiff suggest, “has shown itself to be illusive and filled with frustration” (1992: 1).

A great number of other media scholars make similar points about international media effects studies. For instance, Berger (1992) concludes that regional and subcultural differences between and within countries enable audiences to derive alternative, even ‘aberrant’, decodings from a single media message. Others, also, argue that complexity and diversity of media genres add to the difficulty of research on the media effects on various subcultures. For example, Cohen and Roeh (1992) suggest that the two most prevalent genres of television texts (fiction and news) are differentially mediated, modified, and ‘domesticised’ as they cross international and cultural borders. Thus, the authors conclude that international effect research must emphasise the important process of domesticisation of foreign content by media organisations and also by the audiences in the target society.

Furthermore, in the field of media effects, as for instance Shoemaker and McCombs (1989) argue, cross-sectional survey has a limited applicability since it cannot address the question of ‘change’. This is because cross-sectional, one-shot survey can be used to (1) show covariation, (2) eliminate alternative explanations, and (3) control error variance. But, it lacks the fourth condition of causal studies since it is unable to establish an appropriate time order between a hypothesised, preceding ‘cause’ and an assumed, following ‘effect’. Media effects studies that follow the traditional ‘change’ approach generally rely on longitudinal survey methods -panel and trend studies. These methods are believed to be more suitable for change studies since they provide information for two or more stages of time. These sets of data collected from the same respondents (panel survey) or different samples from the same population (trend survey) can be used in comparisons which include the element of time. Therefore, as Shoemaker and McCombs (1989) suggest, longitudinal survey is the only proper method in effects studies.

However, it is possible to study media effects by cross-sectional studies, though it is not advised indisputably. For example, Chaffee (1992) reports four studies of international media effects out of which three are cross-sectional surveys and the fourth uses an additional secondary analysis method. He concludes that thoughtful planning can assist a survey research to meet the general requirements of comparative, change studies. One possible way for this purpose is collecting retrospective information, that is, to ask respondents to report their present *and* past attitudes and behaviours at a single point of time.¹³⁴ This method, called *pseudopanel* survey, is vulnerable to many problems, the least of which is the respondent's ability or willingness to remember and report his or her beliefs, behaviours, and thoughts during another particular point in the past. Therefore, many media scholars question the applicability of pseudopanel surveys. For instance, Shoemaker and McCombs (1989: 154) warn that "[t]he pseudopanel design is subject to many potential errors and should be avoided".

Despite this, it seems that this method is appropriate at least in the particular case of studies of new technologies in the context of many Third World countries where there is no prior information. In such cases pseudopanel research 'can' be treated, though very cautiously, as if it provides data for different time points and, therefore, facilitates change studies. In the absence of facilities for more proper effect methods, one may prefer to be less certain on the findings of a scientific study than to reject the intellectual attempt altogether. However, using a few retrospective questions, this study relies very limitedly on respondents' answers about their past attitudes and behaviours. Another method is that which concerns establishing causal interrelationships using survey data. This method will be discussed later in this chapter when the problem of causality is dealt with. Further discussions and relevant considerations on the uses of these two methods in this research are presented in the two following chapters which are devoted to the quantitative results of this survey.

¹³⁴ For a similar opinion on the feasibility of cross-sectional research for the study of time-order see Baker (1988). He believes that "[a] cross-sectional study can accomplish the aims of exploration and description. It can also be used for explanatory studies since background information and retrospective data can be related to current statuses, and current statuses to future expectations and aspirations" (p. 101). Also, for a general discussion on the validity and precision of retrospective and *recall* data obtained in social surveys see Moss & Goldstein (1979).

An International Cultivation Research

The research is an international cultivation study. Generally speaking, cultivation research analysis employs cross-sectional survey method and relies on comparisons between responses of heavy-viewers and light-viewers in regard to the television world and real world. The theory tries to distance itself from the simplistic, linear ‘stimulus-response’ model of media effects. Instead, it focuses on long-term, cumulative consequences of exposure to an essentially repetitive and stable system of messages. Thus, Cultivation theory uses standard techniques of cross-sectional survey methods, although, more recent cultivation studies in the United States and other countries with a strong tradition of research on media effects tend to use longitudinal methods. For instance, Gross & Morgan (1985) argue that longitudinal studies are more likely to explain the interrelationship between television and audiences and also they can better document the processes of mainstreaming of ideas. But, as Morgan (1990) suggests, international cultivation research, particularly in countries without a strong media research tradition, apparently lags behind.

However, being an international cultivation inquiry, the current study does not follow cultivation methodology in one aspect. This seems inevitable for most cross-cultural cultivation studies which differ specifically from those studies conducted in the U.S. by Gerbner and his associates. Traditional cultivation methodology consists of two separate studies; media systems analysis and cultivation analysis. The former is a prerequisite for the latter and is designed to provide quantitative statistics on media content which constitute the television world. Yet, as Morgan (1990) suggests many international cultivation research seems to omit the media content system analysis. This is because message system analysis is an extremely expensive and time-consuming undertaking beyond the ability of researchers in the Third World. Morgan argues that “[w]hile it is very difficult to conduct meaningful cultivation analysis in the absence of reliable, comprehensive message system data, [this] should not prevent cultivation researchers from taking advantage of special data collection opportunities” (1990: 243). As the vast majority of similar International cultivation studies, the current research does not attempt to analyse the content of available videocassettes in Iran.

Research in the Context of Contemporary Iran

Another problem stems from the fact that the research studies the *cultivation* effects of *videocassettes* in *Iranian* society. This differentiates the research from the rest of traditional as well as international cultivation studies. It must be made clear that the difference is not because of the medium studied since traditional cultivation research also investigates possible impacts of alternative media including VCRs. For instance, Preston (1990) studies the cultivation of movies, music and magazines. (Also, see Dobrow's (1990) discussion on VCRs implications for cultivation studies in America in previous chapter.) Rather, the difference lies in the fact that almost all cultivation studies consider television (or any other medium) as the ideological and cultural arm of the socio-cultural structure under study. This means that the repetitive messages (whether produced indigenously or imported from other countries) constitute and represent, or at least are to some extent congruent with, the formal, mainstream culture of that society.

This clearly is not the case with the available video programmes in Iran. As discussed in chapters three and four, the content of a vast majority of video cassettes in Iran are officially considered inappropriate and counter to the official culture. The culture mediated in pre-revolutionary Iranian as well as Indian, Turkish, and American video programmes simply 'differs' from that of formal cultural channels -including broadcast media and school curriculum. In other words, unlike other international cultivation studies, the current attempt investigates the possible cultivation impact of alternative, foreign media content that is in contrast with the 'mainstream' culture. It simply assumes that long-term exposure of audiences to repetitive messages of such video cassettes has cultivated attitudes and perceptions different from those held by audiences with little or no exposure.

However, the underlying presumption is somehow problematic. This is probably because of a severe shortage of research information and a relative absence of indigenous theoretical formulations on relevant cultural processes in contemporary Iran, among other factors. At least until the early 1990s, research on cultural issues was not developed due to a myriad of limitations such as the war condition, shortage of funds, involvement of universities and research centres with consequences of the Cultural Revolution, and politico-religious sensitivities interwoven with culture in general. As a

result, there does not seem to exist -even controversially- agreed definitions of applicable terms among researchers of socio-cultural phenomena in contemporary Iran. The very key terms such as cultural mainstream, cultural diversity, official culture, and alternative culture are subjects of tremendous intellectual disputes among the very limited resources published. The lack of research information is particularly true in the case of mass media (see Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). This becomes worse in the case of VCR due to the additional factor of its prohibition for a decade between 1983-1993. The very few descriptive studies (on these see chapter 5) that view VCR as a legitimate research subject were carried out after 1992 and do not provide much information relevant to the present work.

An Exploratory-Explanatory Research

In order to deal with the limitations caused by the problems discussed above, I have had to acquire an optimum research strategy. Particularly when the limitation of time, shortages of research funds and prior data are also taken into consideration, an optimum approach seems to be one that combines exploratory and explanatory perspectives. Being an exploratory-explanatory study, the present research relies on a particular set of hypotheses as the core of its rationale and thus acquires relevant structured and planned instruments for data collection. While at the same time, it attempts to 'keep an open mind' as to the theoretical and methodological matters. Although absolute exploratory *or* explanatory social research is non-existent (see, e.g., Babbie, 1995; Baker, 1988), acknowledgement of the exploratory-explanatory characteristic of this research can clarify its rationale as well as the procedures and techniques applied herein. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the tools of data collection are less structured or less well planned in this research rather it implies that it tends to go beyond merely determining well theorised and hypothesised cause-and-effect interrelationships. It attempts to gather data which may result in a better understanding of alternative and less formulated factual relations. However, this has affected the length and structure of the questionnaire and the amount of collected data.

Research Procedures

Before elaborating the procedures and techniques used in this research, I need to remind the original project of the research included a wider range of issues than what is discussed here. The research questions and hypotheses were more extensive and data collection had relied on two questionnaires (A for students and B for their parents). This project has been carried out and the data of both questionnaires has been transferred into SPSS files. But, the questionnaire B (parents) has been omitted and so relevant hypotheses and questions are not discussed here. This decision is made in the light of some painful realities which include, among other problems, limitations of time and available funds. However, the following sections focus on that part of the hypotheses, variables and questions, and administration procedures which are related to the first questionnaire.

Hypotheses

Regarding its exploratory-explanatory perspective, the research is guided by a wide range of hypotheses. It could be said that the question of the socio-politico-cultural 'effects' of VCRs seems to encompass both categories of impact resulted from the form and the content of the technology. However, here the impact of the form (i.e., class-based ownership of VCR technology) focuses on possible changes in the audiences' media uses and media preferences. (The relevant theoretical and comparative discussions are presented in chapter 2). On the effects of exposure to available content through VCRs, a set of hypotheses are drawn from the Cultivation theory and the notion of audience activity (discussed in the previous chapter). Furthermore, being exploratory, the research may come across some causal relationships between studied variables that are not included in the hypotheses adopted initially.

The research hypotheses are as follow:

H1) Diffusion of VCR is related to social class. In other words, (a) the audience's decision to own a VCR is positively correlated with high social class and

internationalised cultural tastes and (b) over time, VCR's penetration proceeds from the higher to the lower social classes.

H2) The audiences use VCRs ritualistically rather than instrumentally. That is, (a) the audiences are active users of their video sets and the available cassettes, (b) the audiences use VCRs for viewing pre-recorded material rather than for time-shifting or viewing of family films and (c) the audience's main aims for owning a VCR include firstly increasing home entertainment and secondly fulfilment of curiosity, access to information and (professional) self-education.

H3) The audiences' ownership and uses of VCRs are closely related to their uses of, and attitudes toward the conventional (national) media. This implies that (a) the cultural and media policies have increased the reasons for the ownership of VCR technology and (b) VCR ownership and use pattern decreases the amount of audiences' use of national media.

H4) It seems that the length of VCR ownership is correlated with use patterns. In other words, with a longer period of ownership, (a) amount of VCR viewing in a similar period decreases, (b) intention and use of VCR for purely entertainment reasons lessens, (c) parental control and mediation becomes more skilled, (d) parents' anxieties about video's negative effects on their children lessens, (e) purposeful personal activity increases, and (f) time-shifting and library building activities expand.

H5) It seems that VCR cultivates in the audiences different (i.e., non-traditional, Western) perceptions, values and attitudes regarding gender- and sex-role stereotypes, expectation from future, individual-society relations, and occupational aspirations. Therefore, (a) VCR owners more than non-owners, (b) heavy viewers more than moderate and light viewers, and (c) the earlier VCR buyers more than the later owners show changes in their attitudes and expectations.

H6) The amount of cultivation varies across different social groups. That is, it is higher amongst (a) older respondents compared to the youngsters, (b) boys compared to girls, and (c) higher social classes compared to lower social classes.

H8) The preferred video content affects the amount and direction of reported/measured cultivation. That is, (a) various genres, the original countries of production, and the content languages have different effects, and (b) American films have the strongest impact on cultivation of non-traditional, Western perceptions, attitudes and values.

H9) Audiences' activities negatively or positively influence their received cultivation from video content. This means that (a) frequency of various types of audience activity can affect (increase or decrease) the degree of cultivation, (b) parental control (mediation, co-viewing, and rule-making) over the traditionally unacceptable content decreases the amount of reported/measured effects, and (c) viewing context effects the cultivation.

Measurement of the Variables

The research looks for possible hypothetical relationships between various variables out of which some are studied more intensively. However, some of the research variables are measured using detailed and elaborate scales. Here, the presupposed dimensions as well as operationalisation procedures of the most important variables of the research are discussed briefly.

Social class is a complicated and objective-cognitive entity and cannot be studied or measured directly and therefore, the research instead uses socio-economic status (SES). This, too, is in the light of the fact that social classes have undergone intensive transformation in the post-revolutionary Iran and that no accurate estimate exists on the current class structure of the society (see, e.g., Moaddel, 1991). The SES is measured by asking interviewees to specify their family size, type of their residence, facilities and appliances in their homes, and their parents' educational and occupational status. To analyse the SES of each respondent, relevant answers are decoded so that the higher numbers show higher status and then the row numbers of the indices (along with the important factor of residence area in city) are added together. The final scores of respondents, then, are translated into four SES groups: upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and middle social classes. (The relevant questions are numbers 9 and 11-14 in Section One, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Uses of VCRs consist of four types of viewing: pre-recorded material, viewing of home-made family films, time-shifting, and library building. In order to study how the study group utilises VCR sets, the sample respondents are asked to verify how often they view various kinds of pre-recorded cassettes, how often they record television programmes for viewing later at a more convenient time, how many video cassettes they own, and how often they view family films of their own or borrowed from friends and relatives. The frequency of each activity shows the relative importance of each utility type (see questions 10-15, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Ownership decision is a variable which looks for audiences' reasons for owning a VCR set and the possible objections of family members. The reasons for purchase of a VCR may be seen to include negative factors (such as limitations of national television channels and cinema offerings) as well as positive intentions for enhancement of home entertainment, fulfilment of curiosity, professional self-education, or social utility of VCRs for interpersonal communications. For this variable, respondents are asked to choose maximum 5 reasons from a list of 12 given statements. They are also asked to clarify the importance of each factor by numbers 1 (the most important) through 5 (the least important). Also, on any disagreements at the time of VCR purchase, respondents have reported up to two possible objections put forward by members of their family (see questions 4, 6 and 7, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Audience activity consists of three interrelated dimensions: selectivity, involvement and utility. Each of these dimensions may be divided into three viewing-related activities: before, during and after exposure. However, since this research aims to convey the notion of an obstinate audience in the VCR environment as well, the conventional dimensions of activity (see, e.g., Lin, 1990: 80) are combined with audiences' measures to decrease their received effects. The improved audience activity scale in this research consists of 19 statements (question 29, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A) based on a 5-point Likert choices (i.e., "always," "often," "sometimes," "rarely," and "never"). It must be noted that each of the indices of audience activity, can supposedly, influence the amount of cultivation. In other words, repeated and long-term practice of some types of activity may enhance the cultivation effects received by video programmes while others might decrease the effect. The negative or positive impact of each category of activity will be analysed later. The activity scale includes, among other

measures, statements such as how often the audiences made viewing plans, used program guides or suggestions from trusted people, asked the source of obtained cassettes about the content and its suitability for familial viewing, reviewed the films to make sure of their suitability, used fast-forwarding or changed channels over unsuitable scenes or interrupted un-favoured films and so on.

Amount of viewing is a variable devised to provide the researcher with information required for classification of VCR owners into various groups of heavy, moderate, and light viewers. For this variable, different questions are presented to determine the amount of VCR viewing of each respondent, based on their viewing intensity (average days of VCR usage per week), average hours of viewing during weekdays and weekends, average number of programmes viewed during weekdays and weekends, combined with two questions on respondents viewing hours and programmes for the day before filling the questionnaires. This information is acquired through seven separate questions (see, questions 14-20, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Index A).

Use of national media is measured by asking all respondents to answer how often they or members of their families purchased newspapers and magazines, how often they read newspapers, how many and which magazines they read in an average week, how often they listened to radio (hours per week), how many hours they watched national television channels in average weekdays and weekends, and how many times they went to movie theatres in an average month. They are also asked to mention up to six different radio and television programmes they usually watched as well as up to four categories of preferred television programmes. The television genre preferences are weighted by numbers 1 (the most favoured genre) to 4 (the least preferred genre). The audiences use of national media, thus, consists of 12 questions (see, questions 18-29, Section One, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Attitudes, perceptions, and values, according to cultivation theory, can be affected by long-term exposure to repeated images of television. This research assumes that long-term exposure to otherwise unavailable content of mainly Western video programmes has participated in the socialisation process of the research sample. It also assumes that the attitudes, perceptions, and values expressed by the VCR owners and particularly the heavier viewers will show stronger non-traditional (Western) tendencies compared to

the traditional beliefs of non-VCR owners and lighter viewers. In this study four general attitudes are chosen regarding their socio-cultural importance. These include gender- and sex-role stereotypes, expectation from future, individual-society relations, and occupational aspirations. These attitudes are studied by a total of 19 questions. From these questions (see Section Two, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A) 14 are based on a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 represents very weak attitude (“not at all or very little”) through 5 for very strong (dis)agreement with the given statements. There are also four questions with 4-option answers and one question on ideal spouse characteristics with 12 given choices out of which respondents have specified up to 4 important categories.

Here, it should be noted that this method has been adopted in the light of the fact that no standardised attitudinal scales exist in Iran and, therefore, this research had, as much as possible, to rely on invented scales. However, this method creates several difficulties such as the issue of reliability and validity of the attitudinal scales. In order to solve the problems before using the scales in analytic tests, several decoding and computing measures are utilised. For this, incompatible statements are deleted using proper correlation and cluster tests, the direction of negative and positive statements corrected, and finally direction of all indices are changed. The final variable is a continuous scale in which lower grade stands for traditional attitudes and higher score represents a non-traditional (Western) value system.

Parental control is a variable that includes elements of parental mediation, co-viewing, and rule-making. For this variable, a scale is devised with 13 statements (see question 30, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A) on a 5-point Likert answers (i.e., “always,” “often,” “sometimes,” “rarely,” and “never”). This scale includes statements such as parents keep VCR sets in a locked place, adolescents need to acquire permission from their parents if they want to use VCRs in the absence of parents, parent review cassettes before playing them in the presence of all family members, parents decide whom to borrow cassettes from and when and with whom and how much to view video programmes and alike.

These 13 statements are added up so that a scale of attentive-restrictive-directive parental control is created. A higher score on the bases of this scale shows stronger

parental control over use of video sets and cassettes by their children and adolescents. Also, two more questions are included in the questionnaire to measure respondents assessment of the necessity and amount of strictness of the control methods imposed by their parents (see questions 30-33, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Viewing context is studied by two questions: Where usually the respondents viewed video programmes (1. at their homes, 2. at the home of their friends and classmates, 3. at their neighbours' homes, 4. at their relatives' homes, 5. elsewhere). The other question concerned up to two of the most usual combinations of co-viewers when they used VCRs at their own homes (1. all family members together, 2. only children, 3. children with the mother, 4. children with the father, 5. only parents) (see questions 35 and 36, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Video content preferences include four different questions the respondents' most favourite video programme genres (8 choices plus 'other'), feature film based on country of production (7 categories plus 'other'), preferred language(s) (10 choices plus 'other'), and film genres (12 categories). Also, in all questions they are asked to specify up to a maximum of three choices (see questions 21-24, Section Three, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A).

Here it must be noted that there are various interrelated relations between the research variables and particularly some of their relevant indices. Thus, some specific indicators could be used in the analysis of other variables than the ones described here. Exploring the possible, un-hypothesised interrelationships between the numerous variables is a painstaking, though fruitful task, which due to shortage of time and space is not elaborated further. However, discussion on each of the research hypotheses will start with a brief note on relevant manipulations on variables and indicators.

Another point worth explaining here is one related to the source of scale indices - the statements devised for the measurement of variables such as audience activity and parental control. The indices are based on the existing theoretical approaches within the field of media audience research and are drawn from similar studies carried out in Western countries. Then, various modifications are done with the aim of indigenising the relevant scales -a necessary step considering the different context of Iranian society.

Personal experiences of the researcher as well as several in-depth interviews with professional individuals and participating youth and parents have been used as complementary sources. These sources provided information on additional types of personal activities and parental control methods practised by the Iranian audiences which are not popular, if at all existent, in the scales produced by Western researchers. However, each of the final lists of scale statements may be modified, omitted or added, in order to create more comprehensive and practical scales.

Structure of the Questionnaire

In order to measure the relevant variables and to test the research hypotheses a questionnaire was developed. It consists of an introduction and five sections. All the respondents are not required to answer all of the sections. In fact, Sections 3 (36 questions) and 4 (3 questions) are designed for VCR-owners and non-owners respectively and, therefore, are omitted for the irrelevant group. Sections 1 (34 questions), 2 (19 questions) and 5 (7 questions) are answered by all respondents.

Due to the high number of the multisectional hypotheses and the multidimensional scales, the questionnaire is clearly lengthy (altogether 99 questions, out of which five consist of 10 to 19 statements). Obviously, a lengthy questionnaire, such as the one used in this research with 12 pages of questions printed densely, can be tiring and so may create problems of higher rates of un-answered or mis-answered questions. To reduce these risks, as well as because of other reasons such as research economy and limitation of time and administration difficulties, several strategies have been adopted. The questionnaire was devised as a self-administered one, that is designed to be read and answered by the respondents themselves. It is hoped that this method can effectively reduce the time needed for the completion of the questionnaires if conducted based on face-to-face interviews. (This is discussed in the following section.)

Among other methods developed to minimise the dangers of the lengthy questionnaire one is related to the type of questions. Most of the questions are closed-ended, multiple-choice ones, with very few open-ended. Also, in many of the questions, the respondents are only asked to answer by putting a X or ✓ mark their choice over the given 5-points Likert scales. A similar simple task is asked in the case of the majority of

the questions with multiple, closed answers provided. Another strategy was development of a very friendly atmosphere throughout the field work from introduction of the research and its aims within the sample schools until the final contact of the researcher with the sample respondents. Besides the very persuasive procedure (discussed later in this chapter), an informative and highly appealing introduction is added in the beginning of the questionnaire followed by straightforward and motivating questions. This method, particularly the content of the introduction, later proved to be very persuasive and successful.

Sample and Sampling

The research uses a sample of 600 male and female high school students residing in Tehran. The sample students are selected from sample schools located within four areas selected from total 20 districts of Greater Tehran. The sample size and sampling method are chosen in order to make sure that the significant condition of representativeness of the sample is met and the findings can be generalised to the whole research population.¹³⁵ The research population consists of the high school population living in the metropolitan Tehran (417,000 in 1993-94 academic year for all 19 educational areas). My sample size is .2% of the research population (almost 300,000 in 1993-94 academic year for 14 accounted areas). Here, regarding the importance of inter-generational differences within Iranian society, one may argue that the research population is not an exact portion of the Iranian society at large. Because of the nature of sample units, the research findings are attributable to the precise research population; i.e., Tehrani high school students. Any attempt to generalise the findings to the whole of Iranian (or even Tehrani) youth and adolescent and, therefore, to their families or parents must be made with great caution.

In fact, the research findings on issues such as parental control or mediation cannot be confidently generalised to all Iranian (even Tehrani) families, but to those who have at least one child (the sample student) of high school age, at least 14 years old. This means that the research population consists of youngsters usually born after 1979 Revolution, those whose parents have married before 1981-82, and so the parents must have been

¹³⁵ All educational information is based on statistics provided by the Educational Bureaux of Greater Tehran, Ministry of Education, for academic year 1371/72 (1993/94).

young before the Revolution and at the time of research (January-February, 1995) were at least in their late thirties. Briefly speaking, provided the sample is representative, the research findings are attributable to high school students of Greater Tehran and so the study can shed some light on the media habits of their families which are headed by parents at least in their late thirties. The research does not include families without children or those with children but whose eldest child is not yet of high school age. It also does not include families whose youngest child is older than the school age (maximum 19 or 20 years old). The research, also, does not include youngsters who, though of high school age, for whatever reason do not attend high school. This may particularly exclude some of the poor youth and their families who could not afford further education at high schools.

The sampling has had several complicated stages. The research sampling method is, precisely, a *multistage cluster sampling combined with a stratification of three units: primary, secondary, and tertiary*. The procedure is discussed under the following stages. First, the total number of sample (n=600) is determined by: on the one hand, the need for a representative sample as well as the requirements of statistical tests and, on the other hand, the constraints of finance and time. It is hoped that a sample of this size can be sufficient for all statistical tests.

Second, the four sample areas of Tehran (3, 5, 14, and 17), i.e., the primary sampling units, are selected following a long and well-analysed procedure. The procedure starts with a stratification of all 20 districts into four groups on the basis of social class (upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and lower class areas). This stratification is based on two separate sets of demographic and educational indexes¹³⁶ (altogether 30) which can reveal the relative socio-economic status of each area. The demographic indexes (n=18) are calculated from the reports of the latest national census (September, 1991) carried out by the Iranian Statistical Centre.¹³⁷ This category includes indices such as population density, birth rate, employment rate, ratio of single female employment to the number of housewives, ratio of single female education to the

¹³⁶ Here, it should be noted that the educational and civil areas of Tehran do not inviolably overlap and, occasionally, a bordering part of an educational area might be under different district municipality. However, these incompatibilities are ignored except in the case of selecting sample schools.

¹³⁷ Since the published results provide information for the whole of Greater Tehran, the required data for separate areas are bought from the ISC and have been created for the purpose of this research.

number of housewives, ratio of population under 15 and over 65 to the rest of the population, ratio of families with size 8 or plus, illiteracy rate, ratio of families without even one illiterate member to families without even one literate member, ratio of individuals born abroad, ratios of continuity of education and so on. The educational indexes (n=12) are based on statistics provided in the 1993-94 annual report of the Education Bureaux of the Greater Tehran, Ministry of Education. This category includes indexes such as ratio of number of students of 'non-profitable' (private) primary, secondary and high schools, ratio of number of students in second shift of education in primary, secondary and high schools, rate of continuation of education from primary to secondary and to high school. (For a complete list of indexes see Appendix Two.)

After the calculation of the two groups of indices, relative position of each area of Tehran in comparison to other areas is determined on a continuum from 1 to 20. Then, the average position of each area on 18 demographic and 12 educational scales is calculated, based on the fact that on some scales a lower mark is attributed to a higher socio-economic status while in others this is reversed. The position of each area is determined according to its averages in the two cumulative categories of indexes and are, therefore, divided into the four social classes (2.5-6.5 as upper class, 6.5-10.5 as upper-middle class, 10.5-14.5 as lower-middle class, and 14.5-18.5 as lower class). A diagram of the two categories of indexes is used to eliminate areas that fall under incompatible positions, that is when they are classified under different social classes. Using this method, areas 1, 4, 10, 11, and 12 are excluded from the research. From these, areas 1, 4, 11, and 12 possess a higher educational status while their demographic status shows a lower position. Area 10 shows an opposite situation. Also, it is worth noting that areas 1 and 4 respectively are located in the north and north-east of Tehran where educational facilities are sufficient but there are many immigrants from other parts of the country. The other three areas are located in central Tehran where most of the educational facilities are concentrated but are not inhabited by the higher classes. Also, area 20 is eliminated because since 1993 its educational organisation is not part of Greater Tehran and operates under the authorities of educational bureaux of the neighbouring city of Rey to the south of Tehran.

According to the final estimates, the areas of each social class in Tehran are 2, 3, 6, and 7 (upper class); 5, 8, and 13 (upper-middle class); 9, 14, and 16 (lower-middle

class) and 15, 17, 18, and 19 (lower social class). For the next stage, one area is chosen from the list of areas of each social class. Therefore, respectively areas 3, 5, 14, and 17 are selected to represent the relevant social class. In this selection the geographical situation of the areas is noted: area 3 from centre-north, area 5 from north-west, area 14 from east, and area 17 from south-west. The central part of Tehran is excluded from the study, due to the omission of relevant areas.

Then, the proportion of each social class (represented by one area) of the 600 samples is calculated. This is based on a table of quotas divided by various variables of social class, type of high schools (public vs. private), sex of students, and year of education (first to fourth years). The grand total of this table is the total number of high school students of the 14 calculated areas of Tehran ($n=294,000$ out of 417,000 high school students in all 19 educational areas). Then, regarding the total sample of 600, the proportion of sample students is determined based on the relevant multiple variables. This lead the researcher to create one three-dimensional table of sampling quotas for each of the selected areas. These tables show the number of samples required for each cell created according to the type of school, and sex and grade of the students. (For an example of the table see Sampling Procedure, Appendix B.)

For the next step sample schools (secondary sampling units) are chosen, noting that the schools are located within the same educational and civil area represented. Also, boys and girls schools are selected from different neighbourhoods within the area, making sure that the students are evenly distributed. As a final stage, class lists are used for selecting the students (tertiary sampling units) by systematic random sampling - usually based on every tenth name on the list started by a random number between 1 and 9. The selection of sample schools and students continued in each of the areas until the number of completed questionnaires was enough according to the cells of the table of sampling quotas of the area discussed above.

Administration of Research

Having prepared the required sampling tables and having selected the sample areas and schools, administration of the fieldwork followed. For this, several activities were done between September 1994 and March 1995. First of all, three male and two female

interviewers were recruited and trained. These assistants were chosen with regard to their educational background and work experience. All of them were graduates of social sciences working in research institutions, or teaching in high schools, or studying for a postgraduate degree (or even a mixture of all!). They were involved in several long and dynamic debates on the main research questions as well as the structure and content of the questionnaire.

Then, an official permission was obtained from the relevant authorities: Organisation of Educational Research and Planning (OERP or the Deputy Research of Ministry of Education) and Educational Bureaux of Greater Tehran. The latter introduced the researcher and the assistants to the educational authorities in the sample areas (3, 5, 14, and 17). These officials were required to introduce the researchers to the schools and ask for full and active cooperation of school managers by issuing written letters and by direct telephone contacts. The official permission contained a page of instruction of the desirable conditions for interviewing. The aim of this was to prevent any possible diversion in the interviewing procedures by some school managers and to make sure of the necessary uniformity.

The interviewing was accomplished through the following typical procedures in every school. The researcher contacted the school managers in person and submitted the written permission and finally a date was set and preparations were discussed in detail. On the day of interviewing, a pair of interviewers attended the school and the researcher briefly introduced the research and its aims to all students during the morning program when all students gather before the beginning of their daily classes. The researcher in particular stressed the importance of honest cooperation by the sample students. This public introduction was designed to instil positive predispositions in the would-be samples and also to arouse their curiosity and willingness for an active cooperation. Then, the researchers visited the students in their classes one by one and selected the sample students using the name lists. The sample students were assembled in a spare room and it was made sure that all were willing to cooperate. In the very rare cases of hesitation, the sample student was replaced with another student whose name appears in the class list immediately before or after the unwilling one. Then, the students were presented with a detailed and less formal discussion and their questions were answered. The questionnaires were distributed and the students were instructed to read the

introduction and the questions thoroughly and carefully. They were also instructed on how to answer the different types of questions. However, during all interviewing sessions two interviewers were present to answer possible questions and erase misunderstandings. Finally, the returned questionnaires were collected after being checked one by one to make sure that they were correctly and completely answered.

The Problem of Causality

It was suggested that one-shot surveys can be used for explanatory purposes only partially. This is because a perfect explanation requires a 'causal interrelationship' to be proved between a dependent variable (effect) and at least one independent variable (cause). But, data obtained through surveys can merely prove that two variables tend to occur together. In other words, only a positive or negative covariation can be confirmed. Establishing a covariation is, however, a *necessary* condition for demonstrating a causal relationship, but it is not by itself *sufficient*. In fact, for establishing causal relationship between any two given variables it must be confirmed that (1) the cause precedes the effect in time (i.e., time-ordered sequence), (2) the two variables are correlated to each other and that (3) the correlation (or covariation) is not spurious (i.e., not caused by a third intervening variable) (see, e.g., Babbie, 1995; Birnbaum, 1981).

Out of the three criteria, surveys can only fulfil the second one. In fact, the relative disadvantage of surveys as compared to longitudinal studies stems from their inability to establish time-order and to eradicate spurious correlations. The correlations proven by survey data may, in fact, have been caused by a third variable which has affected both variables and so the correlation is not a true causal relation. However, this problematic can be avoided by using some statistical measures available in the SPSS program - namely partial correlation and multiple regression analysis. The former can be used for 'partialling out' (controlling) the impact of the intervening variable(s) as the latter can eliminate the interference between the independent variables entered in the equation (see, e.g., Bryman & Cramer, 1990; Kim & Kohout, 1975). It should be noted here that these methods can only eliminate the interference of variables which are already included in the study and have been entered in the correlation matrices and multiple regression equations. But, they neither eradicate the problem of effects of variables not included in

the study nor can they determine the longitudinal interplay between the variables (see, e.g., Bryman & Cramer, 1990).

Closely related to the first problematic is that which stems from the lack of time-ordered sequence in survey data. Although cautiously, this problem, too, can be solved by using the above-mentioned statistical facilities. For this method the researcher is required to determine the type of relationships between the research variables as much as it is known from the previous studies, theoretical considerations and even his or her personal knowledge (Bryman & Cramer, 1990; Kim & Kohout, 1975). The presuppositions of the researcher can be expressed as some additional causal assumptions which need not be tested in the study. These assumptions are used to map out the possible causal relationships between the intended dependent variable with the independent variables as well as between the independent variables themselves. These assumptions are made in light of the existing knowledge on the type of relationships between the variables. Generally speaking, given a correlation between two variables, introduction of a third variable may result in one of the following situations. First, it may prove that the correlation was spurious. This is when no direct covariation can be established between the dependent and independent variables and in fact their seeming relationship may have been created by their dependence on the third variable. Second, the third variable may prove that the variables are intervening variables since in fact the third variable is the actual cause behind the previously determined independent variable. Third, it may reveal that because of the impact of the third variable the correlation between the dependent and independent variables is moderated. This is when a relationship is found for some category of a sample but not for the others (see, Breen, 1996; Babbie, 1995; Birnbaum, 1981).

This method forms the bases of path analysis as well. But, this research is not intended to be a path study due to the limitation of time and abundance of variables studied herein. However, bearing in mind the limited uses of these methods for establishing causal relations, I will use them in chapter 9 which deals with the effects of VCR and non-VCR related factors on attitudes of the sample. It should be noted that these methods could also have been used in the following chapter where the implications of the length of VCR ownership and the effects of VCR ownership and VCR viewing intensity on use of conventional mass media are discussed. But, again because of

limitations of time and space this is not done and so the relevant analysis should be regarded only at a correlational level.

Problems in the Fieldwork

Several problems have been faced during the long months of the fieldwork (from early September 1994 until mid-march 1995). The first challenge was to obtain organisational and financial support to execute data collection procedures and to cover the huge costs involved. In the absence of any relevant private or academic research body, the very few existing governmental research institutions specialising on mass media studies were contacted. Finally and after several months of negotiations a slim but vital grant was provided by the Centre for Media Studies & Research (CMSR), affiliated to the Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance (MCIG).

However, the real challenge was the organisation of the fieldwork because of the extremely lengthy and time-consuming bureaucratic procedures with the multiple administration involved. This was true not only for attracting the required organisational and financial support, but for acquiring various information or permission. The permission was obtained from the numerous authorities involved (from the Deputy Minister to director-general to school managers and to teachers and to the sample students). Regarding the still sensitive topic of VCR in Iran, each of the authorities had to be assured and convinced about the intentions of the researcher and the aims of the research. To be fair, this problem was faced more in the schools and with school managers than with the higher authorities.

Particularly, access to the female high schools (public and private alike, though for slightly different reasons) was very difficult. Despite the permissions obtained from the higher authorities and their insistence on cooperation by school managers, in several cases even the female research assistants were not welcomed. This created a time- and energy-consuming difficulty. Surprisingly, this problem was faced in areas 3 and 5 which represent upper and upper-middle class residences. Regarding the limited number of female high schools in these areas, the reluctance of their managers to cooperate created some sampling errors. When the problem was eventually alleviated in early March, the

fourth year students were on leave for their final exams and the researcher could not stay longer in the field. The repercussions of this are discussed in the next chapter.

Despite the difficulties, the research has enjoyed invaluable support from some of the authorities in OERP and CMSR, as well as hundreds of managers, teachers and students in the schools.

Chapter VIII

VCRs in Iran: Implications of a New Medium

This chapter deals with part of the statistical findings related to the notions articulated in Hypotheses 1 to 4 (discussed in chapter 7). These include the VCRs' class-based diffusion pattern, VCRs' uses and impact on the uses of conventional mass media, as well as the changes in their uses according to the length of ownership. But, first a brief discussion of the characteristics of the research sample.

Statistical Characteristics of the Sample

The sampling was generally successful. It followed the designed principles and fulfilled most of the expected conditions. However, several notes must be made about the sample. Out of the 600 questionnaires distributed in 27 high schools across the four selected areas of Greater Tehran, only 544 are regarded as valid sources. This attrition is because of the existence of several unfilled questionnaires as well as elimination of few others in which the rate of unanswered questions exceeded 10% of all questions. The final number of valid questionnaires (90.6% of designed sample size) seems satisfactory and sufficient for the intended statistical tests.

It can be concluded that sampling has been relatively successful. A comparison of the final sample with the expected numbers in the tables of sample quotas reveal some crucial points. Many cells show exact numbers and in addition a few vary by one or maximum two points due to the elimination of invalid questionnaires. The success of sampling is very high in the case of boys, due to easy access into their schools and a closer control by the researcher. But the total number of girls is smaller than their proportion. This was, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, because of the difficulties in accessing female high schools even by the female interviewers. In total 56 questionnaires for female students are left unanswered or have been invalidated. This particularly affects areas 3 and 5, with 29 and 23 underscored sample sizes respectively.

In area 3 none of the private schools granted admission (with 13 representatives). Also, when the public schools finally co-operated after several correspondences, students of fourth grade (with 16 samples) were on study leave for their final exams. In area 5, a similar problem in public schools resulted in under-representation of 23 samples. The distribution of the failed sampling on the basis of grade shows that respectively 18, 11, 8, and 19 samples from four high school grades (9 to 12 grades) are missing. The under-representation of female students from the upper and upper-middle classes means that the results discussed in this and the next chapters must be regarded cautiously if generalisation of findings to the research population is intended.

Table 8.1 shows the distribution of achieved and expected sample sizes by area, type of school (public and private) and sex. As to the sex of the respondents, distribution of the samples should consist of 88, 69, 80 and 92 girls and 80, 63, 70 and 58 boys for the four sample areas (total =600) respectively. In the designed sample, the total percentage of the female students was 54.8% while in the final sample 269 (49.4%) girls and 275 (50.6%) boys are present (total =544). The under-representation of girls (at a rate of 5.4%) should be noted if the results are to be generalised to the research population.

Table 8.1- Distribution of Achieved and Expected Sample Sizes
by Area, Sex and Type of School*

Areas	<u>Type of School</u>		<u>Sex of Students</u>		Total
	Public	Private	Male	Female	
3	110 (126)	31 (42)	85 (80)	56 (88)	141 (168)
5	99 (124)	8 (8)	62 (63)	45 (69)	107 (132)
14	146 (150)	0 (0)	70 (70)	76 (80)	146 (150)
17	150 (150)	0 (0)	58 (58)	92 (92)	150 (150)
Total	505 (550)	39 (50)	275 (271)	269 (329)	544 (600)

*The numbers within parentheses show the expected sample sizes.

Out of the 544 achieved sample, respectively 141 (25.9%), 107 (19.7%), 146 (26.8%) and 150 (27.6%) students are from the sample areas 3, 5, 14, and 17. According to the original sample quotas, these figures should amount to 168 (28%), 132 (22%), 150 (25%) and 150 (25%). The under-representation of areas 3 and 5 (and consequently the over-representation of areas 14 and 17) is due to the insufficient number of female students in the achieved sample. Out of the sample 505 (92.8%) study in public schools while 39 (7.2%) attend private schools. The percentages do not significantly vary from the designed statistics. Based on the initial sample quotas, these should be respectively 550 (91.7%) and 50 (8.3%).

Also, out of the total number of 544 respondents respectively 156, 130, 150 and 108 are studying in the four high school years (grades 9 to 12). These figures constitute 28.7, 23.9, 27.6 and 19.9 per cent of the achieved sample. According to the original sample quotas, the percentages should account for 27.5, 23.8, 25.7 and 21.3 respectively. This comparison reveals that, despite differences in the numbers, the proportions of the grades from the achieved sample are in accordance with the original designs. Of the 528 students who reported their age, except for 33 born before 1355 (1976/77) and a single student born in 1360 (1981/82), 494 (93.6%) are born in the five year period of 1355-1359 (21 March 1976-20 March 1981). The period includes two immediate years before and after the 1979 Revolution. Thus, at the time of the fieldwork (January-March 1995) more than 93 per cent of the students were 14 to 18 years of age, with an average of 16.3 male (n=272) and 16.27 female (n=256) students (16.29 for the entire sample).

Although crucial descriptive characteristics of the sample will be discussed under the relevant hypotheses, it is useful to note some findings very briefly. The average family size is 5.56. The most frequent are families with 5 members (n=168, 30.9%), 6 members (n=116, 21.3%) and 4 members (n=94, 17.3%). These three groups constitute almost 70 per cent of the 541 valid cases. From 544 cases, 284 students (52.2%) have a VCR set at their homes while 260 (47.8 %) have not obtained the technology.

The Class-Based Diffusion of VCRs in Iran

Here, the role of the social classes on pattern of VCR's diffusion in Iran is analysed. This analysis distinguishes between, and consists of, the (present) rates of VCR ownership between the social classes and the possible differences in the length of their VCR ownership (based on the year of their very first VCR purchase). However, before the presentation of the results, it seems useful to describe the procedure of measurement of social classes in this research.

Throughout the research, the term social class is used to refer to the socio-economic status (SES) of the respondents. The SES of each respondent is determined using 8 variables -i.e., area of residence, family size, both parents' occupational and educational positions, type of residence, and home appliances. A regression analysis is done in order to test the interdependence of the 8 indices. The matrix of correlations, as well as Factor Analysis, revealed that mother's education was not meaningfully correlated ($p.27$) with the other 7 factors and, therefore, was eliminated. In the process, the individual scores of the 7 valid indicators are added up. The total score is used as a scale to determine the SES of the respondent. Repeated tests of cluster analysis revealed that it is more plausible to divide the sample into four socio-economic groups. These are upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and lower social classes, with respectively 51 (9.4%), 146 (26.8%), 228 (41.9%) and 119 (21.9%) frequencies.

As table 8.2 shows, from 119 samples that belonging to the lower class only 39 families own a VCR (32.8%). This rate increases to 111 families (out of 228) classified as lower middle class and to 97 families (out of 146) identified as upper-middle class. The rates of VCR ownership among the middle classes amount to 48.7% and 66.4%. Also, of the 51 upper class families 37 own a VCR (72.5 percent). Thus, the rate of VCR ownership increases from 32.8% among the lower social class to 72.5% for the upper class. According to this table the rate of VCR ownership among the two upper classes is higher than the average for the whole society (52.2%). Test of the chi-square (χ^2) also confirms the difference between the four identified social classes ($p<01$).

Table 8.2- Distribution of VCR Ownership Rates of the Social Classes

Own a VCR	Social Classes				Total
(Row; Col; Total%)	lower	lower-middle	upper-middle	upper	
Yes	39 (13.7; 32.8; 7.2%)	111 (39.1; 48.7; 20.4%)	97 (34.2; 66.4; 17.8%)	37 (13; 72.5; 6.8%)	284 (52.2%)
No	80 (30.8; 67.2; 14.7%)	117 (45; 51.3; 21.5%)	49 (18.8; 33.6; 9%)	14 (5.4; 27.5; 2.6%)	260 (47.8%)
Total	119 (21.9%)	228 (41.9%)	146 (26.8%)	51 (9.4%)	544 100%

A further analysis of class-based diffusion of VCRs in Iran is possible through a look at the length of ownership. Table 8.3 shows the penetration of VCRs in Iran by year of purchase and social class. According to the data obtained from 278 VCR owners who have identified the year of their first VCR purchase, the penetration of VCRs has progressed through several identifiable stages. During the pre-revolutionary era (before March 1977) only 7 VCRs were owned by the sample families. This figure doubles during the three turbulent years between 1978 and 1980 and, mounting to 36 families, accelerates during the following three year period after the revolution (1981-83). Then, after a relative decrease in the period between 1984-1986 ($n=30$), the number of new VCR families increased during 1987-89 to the level of the revolutionary years ($n=37$). However, the most successful years of VCRs' penetration in Iran was a three year period between 1990-92. During this period, 100 of the sample VCR families (36%) obtained their sets. The penetration rate continued to be relatively high for the following years ($n=54$, 19.4 percent of all VCR families).

As table 8.3 shows, upper classes obtained their VCRs before the lower classes. While the majority of the few lower class VCR owners have obtained their sets relatively recently (77.7% between 3 to 6 years before the research date), the upper class families had access to VCR earlier. Also, comparison of the average years of VCR ownership reveal similar results on the differences between the four social classes. While the lower and the lower middle-classes have had access to VCRs respectively on average 5.2 and 6 years, the upper-middle and upper class families have obtained their VCR sets on average 8.9 and 11.2 years before the date of data gathering. All tests show with very high probability (e.g., $r=.3988$; $p<.01$) that VCR has a class identity in Iran. This means that

the upper of the four social classes have obtained their VCRs earlier than the lower social classes. Also, despite the higher penetration of VCR among lower social classes in the past few years, the research finds that the class distinction still remains and in 1995 the higher social classes had more access to VCRs than the lower class families. In addition, another interesting result here is that lower class families, although still owning relatively fewer videos, have had their VCR sets for a longer period of time than the lower-middle class households.

Table 8.3- Year of VCR Purchase of the Four Social Classes

Purchase Year	Social Classes				Total
(Row; Col; Total%)	lower	lower-middle	upper-middle	upper	
1) 1976 and before more than 19 years	0	1 (14.3; .9; .4%)	5 (71.4; 5.2; 1.8%)	1 (14.3; 2.8; .4%)	7 (2.5%)
2) 1977-79 16 to 18 years	1 (7.1; 2.6; .4%)	1 (7.1; .9; .4%)	7 (50; 7.3; 2.5%)	5 (35.7; 13.9; 1.8%)	14 (5%)
3) 1980-82 13 to 15 years	0	8 (22.2; 7.5; 2.9%)	16 (44.4; 16.7; 5.8%)	12 (33.3; 33.3; 4.3%)	36 (12.9%)
4) 1983-85 10 to 12 years	2 (6.7; 5.1; .7%)	11 (36.7; 10.3; 4%)	11 (36.7; 11.5; 4%)	6 (20; 16.7; 2.2%)	30 (10.8%)
5) 1986-88 7 to 9 years	7 (18.9; 17.9; 2.5%)	12 (32.4; 11.2; 4.3%)	14 (37.8; 14.6; 5%)	4 (10.8; 11.1; 1.4%)	37 (13.3%)
6) 1989-91 4 to 6 years	19 (19; 48.7; 6.8%)	45 (45; 42.1; 16.2%)	30 (30; 31.3; 10.8%)	6 (6; 16.7; 2.2%)	100 (36%)
7) 1992-94 1 to 3 years	10 (18.5; 25.6; 3.6%)	29 (53.7; 27.1; 10.4%)	13 (24.1; 13.5; 4.7%)	2 (3.7; 5.6; .7%)	54 (19.4%)
Total	39 (14%)	107 (38.5%)	96 (34.5%)	36 (12.9%)	278 (100%)

Here, a further statistical test is used to evaluate the result. Using one-way ANOVA analysis, a further test is carried out to reveal the possible meaningful differences ($p \leq .05$) between pairs of the four classes. The test shows that five out of the six possible comparisons are meaningful; both of the two upper classes own VCRs more than the two lower class families and the upper-middle class families own VCRs more than the lower class. But, there does not seem to exist a valid difference between the two upper classes on their rates of VCR ownership. This result may be partially because of the relatively small size of the upper class. Also, a similar ANOVA analysis reveals that

the upper class families have obtained their sets earlier than the other three groups and the upper-middle households sooner than the lower-middle and lower class families. But, comparison between the lower-middle and lower classes does not reveal a reliable difference.

Conclusion: The findings confirm the relevant research hypothesis. It was hypothesised that VCRs' penetration in Iran started from the higher classes and then gradually the families with a lower socio-economic status obtained a set. It is also confirmed that even at the time of the fieldwork (in January-March 1995) VCRs' penetration was not equal among all classes. In addition, one-way ANOVA method (with the 'interval' variables of SES and length of VCR ownership) reveals almost a completely positive and linear interrelationship between SES and length of ownership. The only exception is group 3 in the table; those who have a higher socio-economic status but have purchased their video sets after groups 1 and 2 in the table.

Instrumental vs. Ritualistic Use of VCRs

This hypothesis is adopted to determine whether the research sample's use of VCR sets is instrumental or ritualistic. Although these are not totally mutually exclusive types of media use, the former is related to seeking certain media content for more informational reasons while the latter refers to watching entertaining programmes. Accordingly, media use motivations and the subsequent content preferences are different in the two media use types. In the VCR environment, various patterns of usage of video sets and cassettes (time-shifting, viewing pre-recording material, library building, and viewing family films) can be said to be related more or less to ritualistic or instrumental uses of VCRs.

In Iran, according to available information (see chapter 5), the vast majority of video cassettes in circulation are entertainment programmes such as feature films and music shows. Thus, it is assumed that to a certain extent viewing pre-recorded material reflects a ritualistic use of VCR while viewing of the family films may reflect more an instrumental type of use. Family library films may include over-the-air recordings, family

films and purchased pre-recorded entertaining programmes. Here, again, time-shifting is more likely to include recording of informational programmes of the television channels since entertaining programmes are scarce and repetitive. However, the current research was unable to obtain all the required information on the subject because of the existence of an already lengthy questionnaire. Therefore, the research can not unquestionably determine instrumental and/or ritualistic uses of the VCRs by the sample population. Based on available findings, three types of data are presented here: a descriptive discussion on the frequency of each type of VCR uses followed by analyses of the viewing intensity and content preferences of the sample population.

According to the findings, of 282 valid cases (out of a total 284 VCR owners), a majority do not own any cassette at home ($n=44$, 15.6%) or own less than 10 cassettes ($n=142$, 50.5%). Also, another 16.7% ($n=47$) and 7.4% ($n=21$) own respectively 11 to 20 and 21 to 30 cassettes. The rest of the population ($n=24$, 9.9%) own more than 30 tapes. The total average of cassettes per household is 16.6. This reveals that most of the families do not keep a remarkable amount of cassettes at their homes and mainly rely on rented or borrowed, pre-recorded cassettes -which are generally entertaining. As to the family films (i.e., recordings from familial ceremonies and gathering), out of 265 valid answers, 41.5 percent ($n=110$) have indicated that they do not own any family films and respectively 64, 36, 19 and 11 individuals have reported that they own 1 to 4 cassettes. Only a small proportion of the sample ($n=25$, 9.4%) have indicated that they owned 5 or more family recordings.

It should be noted that no other information was obtained regarding the content of cassettes owned by the respondents. This data reveals that out of an average 16.6 cassettes owned by the families only 1.9 cassettes are family films and the rest should be either those recorded off-the-air (presumably informative content such as news and documentaries) or pre-recorded programmes (that are dominated by entertaining content). The data on the recurrence of over-the-air recording reveals that the vast majority of the respondents (and their family members) never or very rarely use their video sets for time-shifting purpose: Out of 279 valid answers, 162 (58.1%) respondents never recorded television programmes. Also, the amount of time-shifting of the rest of the sample is very low: In an average year, only 23.3% ($n=65$) once or twice and another 10.4% ($n=29$) three or four times attempt to record television programmes. From the

rest of the sample, 2.2% and 6.1% (n=6 and n=17) recorded television programmes annually between 5 to 10 or more than 10 times.

These results strongly confirm that the majority of the sample do not own substantial numbers of films (on average 16.6 cassettes), they do not own a noticeable amount of family films (on average 1.9 cassettes per household), and do not frequently attempt to record television offerings (on average 1.8 cases in every year). This implies that a vast majority of the sample utilises their video sets for viewing pre-recorded material. This category includes very limited number of family films borrowed from relatives or friends¹³⁸ and so is dominated by market offerings which by and large are entertainment programmes. This finding is confirmed by the following findings on the intense use of VCRs for viewing pre-recorded cassettes. These include number of days of VCR use in an average week as well as four frequencies for (a) amount and (b) length of viewing pre-recorded material in a typical (1) weekday and (2) weekend. (In the description of the fourfold categories percentages are not provided. This is because of the existence of a relatively high number respondents that have chosen “don’t know” options and, therefore, validity of two equally important percentages of total 284 VCR owners and of the valid cases.)

According to the information on the amount and type of cassettes borrowed and/or rented by the respondents, the vast majority of the VCR owners actively use their sets to view pre-recorded cassettes. Out of 241 valid cases (other than unanswered and “don’t know” option), 95, 38 and 61 (33.5, 13.4 and 21.4 per cent of 284 VCR owners) respectively use their sets everyday, more than four days, and three or two days every week. Almost 15 per cent of the respondents have indicated that they use their sets very rarely, that is only once (n=24, 8.5%) or less than once a week (n=23, 8.1%).

As to the numbers of video programmes usually viewed in an ordinary week day, 93 respondents have indicated that they view one program while 52 and 14 have chosen ‘two or three’ and ‘four or more’ programmes. Also, 111 chose ‘don’t know’ option. Thus, each respondent on average watches 1.7 program every day on video. The sample

¹³⁸ The information on the number of family films borrowed annually from their relatives or friends confirms this result. From a total 256 valid answers, 73 (28.4%) never borrow family films, 45 (17.5%), 40 (15.6%), 27 (10.5%), 16 (6.2%) and 15 (5.8%) borrow only one to five family films from their relatives or friends. Therefore, only 66 families (23.5%) of the population borrows 6 or more family films every year, with an average of 4.2 cassettes per annum per household.

students spent on average 2 hours every day using their video sets: 79 less than one hour, 68 between one and two hours, 39 between two and three hours and 19 more than three hours (total valid cases =205). Also, on normal vacation day (weekends and alike) 95 respondents watch only one program while 74 watch two or three and 20 watch more than three programmes and 87 chose 'don't know' option. The average number of programmes watched is almost 2 and the average time spent viewing video programmes in an average vacation day is 2.2 hours. 57 students spend less than one hour, 76 one to two hours, 50 two to three hours and 26 more than three hours. It is obvious that the average number of programmes and hours of viewing are higher for weekends compared to ordinary week days.

Based on the statistics discussed above, it is estimated that in an average week, 57.4% of valid answers (n=74, out of 129 valid cases) view between 2 to 5 programmes, 26.4% (n=34) between 6 and 10 and 11.7% (n=15) between 11 and 15 programmes. The rest (n=6, 4.7%) view more than 15 every week. Considering that usual video programmes run for between 1 to 1.5 hour, the viewing time follows similar pattern: 52.1% (n=85, out of 163 valid answers) between 2 to 7 hours, 31.9% (n=52) 8 to 13 hours, 8.6% (n=14) 14 to 18 hours and 7.4% (n=12) between 19 and 24 hours every week. The respondents view on average 6.16 programmes and spend 8 hours per week watching this video content. Here, a comparison between the average pre-recorded programmes with average programmes recorded over-the-air or family films reveals the dominance of the VCRs' use for viewing pre-recorded entertainment material. The respondents normally view 6.16 pre-recorded programmes *per week* while they record only 1.8 television offerings and borrow 4.2 family films from their relatives or friends *per annum*.

Another test to determine the ritualistic or instrumental use of VCRs was to calculate the rate of heavy viewing. This relies on the assumption that, as Rubin (1986:294) suggests, the ritualised use is more related to greater exposure to the medium while instrumental use typically correlates with news and other informative programmes, but not with high viewing levels. In order to classify the sample into various groups of heavy/light viewers, several tests are used in this research such as cluster analysis and discriminant analysis. According to the results of the tests, it is believed that the classification of the sample into three groups (light, moderate and heavy viewers) is

statistically more reliable than the two extreme groups. The light viewers are those who use their video sets relatively less frequently, view fewer programmes and spend lesser time watching video cassettes. Heavy viewers, on the other hand, use their video sets more often, view more programmes and spend greater time watching video content. The moderates are considered as a statistically meaningful entity in between the two extreme groups.

Accordingly, the sample is divided into three groups with almost equal members: Out of 284 VCR owners, 106 (37.3%) are light viewers, 90 students (31.7%) moderate and 88 (31%) heavy users of their video sets. This implies that the number of ritualistic VCR users is at least equal to the heavy viewers; 37.3 per cent of the research population. However, it seems more likely that the amount of ritualistic VCR users exceeds the number of heavy users because the moderate and even the light viewers can also use their VCRs for viewing merely entertaining content, although their overall VCR use is less intense.

Another test is carried out to determine the ritualistic or instrumental uses of VCR using content preferences of the sample audiences. For this, the respondents were required to indicate from a list of 9 options (including 'else') up to three categories of content they mostly preferred and usually watched. According to the result shown in table 8.4, 122 respondents (43%) have indicated feature films as their first choice and 67 (30.9%) mentioned music shows. In addition, 25 (8.9%) and (6.7%) have indicated documentaries and educational programmes respectively. The other categories are less preferred as the first choice and have been chosen by less than 5 students.

As table 8.4 shows, as the first choice, the two most popular categories are entertainment (film and music shows) followed after a gap by two informative types (educational and documentary). The number of students who chose films, music shows and documentaries decrease from the first to the second and to the third most favourite content. Instead, the frequencies of cartoons and other children's programmes, light entertainment (such as circus and magic shows) and family films increase from the first to the second and to the third choices. Although the frequencies of educational and professional programmes increases slightly from the first to the third options, it is noticeable that their increase is lower compared to those of family films and light

entertainment. The total column of the table shows that feature films and music shows are the most popular types of content among the sample, followed by educational cassettes and documentaries. The least favourite content types are professional and light entertainment.

Table 8.4- Three Most Preferred VCR Content Types

Categories (Col. %)	Preferences			Total*
	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	
Documentary	25 (8.8%)	10 (3.5%)	22 (7.7%)	117 (6.9%)
Music Show	87 (30.6%)	65 (22.9%)	21 (7.4%)	412 (24.2%)
Film	122 (43%)	90 (31.7%)	20 (7.0%)	566 (33.2%)
Educational	19 (6.7%)	21 (7.4%)	30 (10.6%)	129 (7.6%)
Professional	2 (.7%)	4 (1.4%)	8 (2.8%)	22 (1.3%)
Children's	2 (.7%)	24 (8.5%)	38 (13.4%)	92 (5.4%)
Light Entertainment	3 (1.1%)	10 (3.5%)	18 (6.3%)	47 (2.8%)
Family Films	3 (1.1%)	20 (7%)	47 (16.5%)	96 (5.6%)
Others	5 (1.8%)	10 (3.5%)	32 (11.3%)	67 (3.9%)
Un-known	16 (5.6%)	30 (10.6%)	48 (16.9%)	156 (9.2%)
Total	284	284	284	1704

* Total is calculated according to the importance of the choices (= (1st x3) + (2nd x2) + 3rd choices).

As another step to determine the ritualistic use of VCRs, the content categories are classified into two educational-informative and entertaining groups. The former includes documentaries, educational and professional programmes and family films while the latter consists of films, music shows, light entertainment, and children's programmes. Then, the popularity of these two groups is compared without regarding their occurrence as the most or the least preferred content. According to the findings, there are only 49 informational-educational first choices (18.6% out of 263 valid cases) while 214 choices

(81.4%) are some kind of entertaining programmes. As the second choice, out of total 244 valid cases, 55 (22.5%) are informative and 189 (77.5%) entertaining preferences. But, as the third most popular content there are 107 (52.5%) educational-informational and 97 (47.5%) entertaining preference. It is possible to quantify the importance of the two main categories using their frequencies multiplied by their position as the first to the third choices¹³⁹. From a total of 1481 choices of the respondents 364 (24.6%) are for the educational-informative content while 1117 (75.4%) for the entertainment. Also, it is interesting to note that according to chi-square test as well as the ANOVA analysis, no difference has been established between any pairs of social classes and viewing groups (light, moderate, and heavy viewers) based on their educational or entertainment content preferences. In other words, respondents with various class backgrounds and with different intensity of VCR viewing prefer and view similar amounts of educational and entertainment programmes.

Conclusion: Various tests are employed to determine the ritualistic or instrumental uses of VCRs. A comparison between four main types of VCR functions confirms the domination of viewing pre-recorded material (the most likely associated with ritualistic use) over watching family films, library building and time-shifting. The analysis of viewing intensity reveals that at least one third of the sample are heavy users of video sets and, therefore, are more likely to be categorised as dependent on their ritualistic viewing habits. Then, the analysis of content preference established that almost three-quarters of the sample's VCR viewing involves entertainment programmes. Finally, one may conclude cautiously that between 1/3 and 3/4 of the sample are usually ritualistic users of their video sets.

Effects of VCR on Use of Conventional Mass Media

Information on the uses of conventional mass media (print, cinema and broadcasting) is gathered by using 12 questions. Here, the possible interrelationship between VCR ownership and intensity of VCR viewing with the sample's quantitative use of the conventional media is analysed. However, it should be clarified that any relationship confirmed here should be interpreted as covariation and not necessarily as a

¹³⁹ The first choice x3 plus the second choice x2 plus the third choice, excluding the 'others' option.

causal relationship. Establishing a causal relationship, as discussed in chapter 7, requires a proven time-ordered sequence and correlation between the two variables and that this correlation is not spurious. In this section it is, however, possible to analyse the causal relationships using relevant partial correlation and multiple regression analysis. But, these analyses are omitted because of limitation of time and space.

Newspaper Purchase and Readership

Based on 536 valid answers, 103 respondents (or members of their families) subscribed to or purchase newspapers everyday (19.2%), 133 (24.8%) usually buy newspapers and 85 (15.9%) purchase them once or twice a week. Also, respectively 188 (35.1%) and 27 (5%) of the sample rarely (less than once a week) or never purchases newspapers. Distribution of newspaper purchase by the socio-economic status of the respondents and VCR ownership reveals strong relationships, with the calculated chi-square significance at $p < .01$ level. This means that higher social classes as well as VCR owners purchase newspapers more often compared to the lower social strata of the society and non-VCR owners. The ANOVA analysis shows that it is highly probable ($p \leq .05$) that the two upper classes purchases newspapers more than the two lower classes. But, there are no significant differences between the frequencies of newspaper purchasing between the two upper or the two lower social classes. Also, similar test reveals that the VCR owners (whatever their viewing intensity) buy newspapers more frequently than non-VCR owners. As yet another statistical test, Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric one-way ANOVA is performed. This is because newspaper purchasing is not a real interval variable and the Kruskal-Wallis uses mode instead of mean and can therefore overcome this problem. Using this test, the results of chi-square and ANOVA analyses are confirmed.

As to the frequency of newspaper readership, as table 8.5 shows, 44 and 207 respondents (8.2 and 38.5% of 538 valid cases) respectively never or very rarely read newspapers. In addition, 99 (18.4%) have indicated that they read newspapers only once or twice a week and 127 (23.6%) and 61 (11.3%) respectively read newspapers most days or everyday of the week. Regarding the strong relationship between the two variables: newspaper purchase and readership, distribution of newspaper readership by

both SES and VCR ownership is significant. According to table 8.5, the role of SES and VCR ownership in the higher rates of newspaper readership is obvious, although the largest parts of all social classes rarely read newspapers. The percentages of respondents who rarely read newspapers decreases from lower to higher social classes (48.7 to 19.3%) while the percentages of the samples who usually read newspapers increases from the lower class (19.3%) to the higher social class (25.5%).

Table 8.5- Newspaper Readership by SES and VCR Ownership

	Newspaper Readership					Total
(Row; Col%)	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	
<u>Social Classes (SES):</u>						
lower	6 (13.6; 5%)	58 (28; 48.7%)	25 (25.3; 21%)	23 (18.1; 19.3%)	7 (11.5; 5.9%)	119 (22.1%)
lower-middle	19 (43.2; 8.4%)	82 (39.6; 36.1%)	47 (47.5; 20.7%)	59 (46.5; 26%)	20 (32.8; 8.8%)	227 (42.2%)
upper-middle	15 (34.1; 10.6%)	53 (25.6; 37.6%)	18 (18.2; 12.8%)	32 (25.2; 22.7%)	23 (37.7; 16.3%)	141 (26.2%)
upper	4 (9.1; 7.8%)	14 (6.8; 27.5%)	9 (9.1; 17.6%)	13 (10.2; 25.5%)	11 (18; 21.6%)	51 (9.5%)
<u>VCR Ownership:</u>						
no	21 (8.2; 47.7%)	115 (44.7; 55.6%)	53 (20.6; 53.5%)	48 (18.7; 37.8%)	20 (7.8; 32.8%)	257 (47.8%)
yes	23 (8.2; 52.3%)	92 (32.7; 44.4%)	46 (16.4; 46.5%)	79 (28.1; 62.2%)	41 (14.6; 67.2%)	281 (52.2%)
Total	44 (8.2%)	207 (38.5%)	99 (18.9%)	127 (23.6%)	61 (11.3%)	538 (100%)

The role of VCR ownership is clear as well: an increasing percentage of respondents who read newspapers own a video set more frequently. The only exception are the respondents who never read newspapers: out of 44 respondents who never read newspapers 23 (52.3%) own a VCR while 21 (47.7%) have not obtained the technology. As to the rest of the sample, 44.4% (n=92) of the respondents who rarely read newspapers own a VCR while 55.6% (n=115) do not own a video set. These figures increase steadily so from 61 respondents who read newspapers everyday 67.2% own a VCR and 32.8 percent do not own one . The chi-square tests show that higher rates of

newspaper readership is correlated with higher social class ($p < .01$) and VCR ownership ($p < .01$). The One-Way ANOVA test shows that the higher social class read newspapers more frequently than other three social classes. But, there is no difference in the readership between the heavy, moderate and light VCR users ($p < .44$). The non-parametric tests confirm these results.

Magazine Readership

A similar procedure to that of newspaper readership is followed here, see table 8.6. As the table shows, most of the respondents purchase none or only one or two magazines every week (with respectively 115 and 344 frequencies out of a total 528 valid answers). The number of magazines purchased per week does not vary between the social classes ($p < .96$) and so students with various socio-economic backgrounds show a similar magazine readership behaviour. But interestingly enough, the respondents who own VCRs tend to read more magazines every week ($p < .02$). Table 8.6 illustrates the difference. Although the majority of VCR owners and non-owners read less than three magazines every week or none, VCR owners (with 52.7 percent of all population) constitute only 44.3% of the respondents who never read magazines, 64.7% of those who read one or two magazines every week. Also, the majority of the respondents who read an average of three or more magazines per week own a VCR.

A further study of VCR owning groups reveals that most probably ($p < .01$) heavier VCR users tend to read more magazines than lighter viewers. The ANOVA tests confirms that the heavy viewers are more likely to read more magazines than moderate and light viewers, but there are no significant differences between the moderate and light viewers. The nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis as well as Regression tests confirm that, contrary to some speculations, video sets and cassettes do not contribute to an increase of dislike for reading in society (all calculated at $p \leq .01$). It is also surprising that while newspaper readership is correlated with social class and not with VCR ownership and viewing patterns, the number of magazines purchased every week is associated with ownership and viewing intensity of VCRs and not with SES.

Table 8.6- Magazine Readership by SES; VCR Ownership & Viewing Intensity

Table 6: Magazine Readership by SES, VCR Ownership & Viewing Intensity					
	Magazine Readership (no. per week)				Total
(Row; Col%)	none	one or two	three or four	five or more	
<u>Social Classes (SES):</u>					
lower	26 (22.6; 22.6%)	76 (66.1; 22.1%)	11 (9.6; 22%)	2 (1.7; 10.5%)	115 (21.8%)
lower-middle	49 (22.2; 42.6%)	142 (64.3; 41.3%)	20 (9; 40%)	10 (4.5; 52.6%)	221 (41.9%)
upper-middle	32 (22.4; 27.8%)	91 (63.6; 26.5%)	15 (10.5; 30%)	5 (3.5; 26.3%)	143 (27.1%)
upper	8 (16.3; 7%)	35 (71.4; 10.2%)	4 (8.2; 8%)	2 (4.1; 10.5%)	49 (9.3%)
<u>VCR Ownership & Viewing Intensity:</u>					
non-owners	64 (25.6; 55.7%)	164 (65.6; 47.7%)	15 (6; 30%)	7 (2.8; 36.8%)	250 (47.3%)
light viewers	26 (25; 22.6%)	70 (67.3; 20.3%)	5 (4.8; 10%)	3 (2.9; 15.8%)	104 (19.7%)
moderate viewers	17 (19.3; 14.8%)	56 (63.6; 16.3%)	10 (11.4; 20%)	5 (5.7; 26.3%)	88 (16.7%)
heavy viewers	8 (9.3; 7%)	54 (62.8; 15.7%)	20 (23.3; 40%)	4 (4.7; 21.1%)	86 (16.3%)
Total	115 (21.8%)	344 (65.2%)	50 (9.5%)	19 (3.6%)	528 (100%)

Listening to Radio

Of 532 valid answers, the majority of the students listen to radio rarely or less than one hour per day (n=221, 41.5% and n=214, 40.2% respectively). Therefore, only less than 20 percent of the whole sample spend more than one hour everyday listening to radio programmes: 50 (9.4%) two hours, 26 (4.9%) three hours and 21 (3.9%) four hours or more. Although there are some minor differences in the amount of radio listening between four social classes, the chi-square test establishes no significant overall variance. But, the ANOVA analysis confirms that both lower classes are more likely to listen to radio regularly compared to the upper-middle class.

Further analysis of the amount of hours the respondents spend listening to radio yields interesting results. 47.5 percent of VCR owners indicated that they never listen to radio and 34.1% listen less than one hour per day, while from the non-owners 35.2% never and 46.9 percent up to one hour everyday listening to radio programmes.

According to the results of the chi-square tests, VCR owners have significantly less radio listening activity than non-owners ($p < .02$). But, as to the possible differences between three groups of VCR owners (light, moderate and heavy viewers), surprisingly, comparison does not confirm any difference. This is partially because of the fact that the average amount of radio listening decreases marginally from non-owners to the light and to the moderate viewers but it again increases for the heavy VCR users.

Analyses within each of the two groups of VCR owners and non-owners reveal interesting results. As for the non-VCR owners, the upper and then the lower social classes have higher radio listening activities than the two middle classes. This changes in the case of VCR owners since listening activity decreases from the lower to the lower-middle and upper-middle but it again increases for the upper social class. Here again it should be noted that these marginal differences are not statistically significant. Briefly speaking, the amount of radio listening is not correlated with social class or VCR viewing intensity but with VCR ownership. This simply means that, regardless of their social class or viewing intensity, the owners of video sets listen to radio less than the non-owners.

Cinema Attendance

Data on the sample's cinema attendance is gathered using a question which asked the respondents to indicate how many times in a typical month they went to movie theatres. The choices consisted of never, rarely (less than once a month), once a month, two or three, and four or more times a month. The result (see table 8.7) shows that 123 (22.7%) and 253 (46.6%) never or rarely go to the cinemas while 89 (16.4%) once, 58 (10.7%) two or three times and only 20 (3.7%) go to movie four or more times. Distribution of the frequencies by the SES factor does not show a significant variance between the four social classes ($p < .89$). But, the VCR-related factors of ownership and viewing intensity prove to be important (both at $p < .01$). A comparison between all VCR owners with the non-owners reveals that the former group, regardless of their socio-economic status, more often go to movies. Only 16.3% of the VCR owners never go to movies (compared to 29.6% of the non-owners) while 20.1 percent of the owners go to

movies twice or more times every month, as contrasted to a mere 8.1% of the non-owners.

The role of viewing intensity shows that it is most likely that the heavier VCR users attend to movies more frequently than the lighter viewers. The ANOVA analysis confirms that the heavy viewers have a higher rate of cinema attendance compared to non-owners as well as those owners with moderate and light viewing intensity. Also, moderate viewers are more likely to go to movie theatres than the non-owners. However, no significant difference is found between the non-owners and light viewers. The non-parametric test of Kruskal-Wallis and media confirms these findings ($p < .01$).

Table 8.7- Cinema Attendance by SES, VCR Ownership and Viewing Intensity

	Cinema Attendance (times per month)					Total
(Row; Col%)	never	rarely	once	two or three	four or more	
<u>Social Classes (SES):</u>						
lower	33 (27.7; 26.8%)	56 (47.1; 22.1%)	15 (12.6; 16.9%)	12 (10.1; 20.7%)	3 (2.5; 15%)	119 (21.9%)
lower-middle	49 (21.5; 39.8%)	102 (44.7; 40.3%)	44 (19.3; 49.4%)	24 (10.5; 41.4%)	9 (3.9; 45%)	228 (42%)
upper-middle	31 (21.4; 25.2%)	72 (49.7; 28.5%)	22 (15.2; 24.7%)	15 (10.3; 25.9%)	5 (3.4; 25%)	145 (26.7%)
upper	10 (19.6; 8.1%)	23 (45.1; 9.1%)	8 (15.7; 9%)	7 (13.7; 12.1%)	3 (5.9; 15%)	51 (9.4%)
<u>VCR Ownership & Viewing Intensity:</u>						
non-owners	77 (29.6; 62.9%)	117 (45; 46.2%)	45 (17.3; 50.6%)	15 (5.8; 25.9%)	6 (2.3; 30%)	260 (%)
light viewers	21 (19.8; 17.1%)	60 (56.6; 23.7%)	12 (11.3; 13.5%)	11 (10.4; 19%)	2 (1.9; 10%)	106 (19.5%)
moderate viewers	13 (14.4; 10.6%)	50 (55.6; 19.8%)	13 (14.4; 14.6%)	11 (12.2; 19%)	3 (3.3; 15%)	90 (16.6%)
heavy viewers	12 (13.8; 9.8%)	26 (29.9; 10.3%)	19 (21.8; 21.3%)	21 (24.1; 36.2%)	9 (10.3; 45%)	87 (16%)
Total	123 (22.7%)	253 (46.6%)	89 (16.4%)	58 (10.7%)	20 (3.7%)	543 (100%)

Television Viewing During Weekdays and Weekends

Information on the amount of television viewing is gathered for the week days as well as for the weekends and other holidays. The result, see table 8.8, shows the relative popularity of television viewing throughout the week. The majority of respondents indicated that they watch television more than one hour per week day: 145 (28.4%) one to two hours, 211 (38.9%) three to four hours, and 132 (24.3%) five hours or more. Only 42 (7.7%) of the sample watch television less than one hour every day and 4 (.7%) never watch television. Although the number of respondents who never or very rarely watch television increases, the overall amount of television viewing almost doubles from an average 1.53 hours for the weekdays to 3 hours during weekends. The majority watch three to four hours ($n=214$, 39.4%) and five hours or more ($n=204$, 37.6%). The rest of the sample spends less than two hours every holiday watching national television channels: 7 (1.3%) never, 21 (3.9%) less than one hour and 97 (17.9%) between one to two hours.

Surprisingly enough, the amount of television viewing during weekdays and weekends shows no significant variance between social classes (respectively $p<.20$ and $p<.23$). Also, VCR ownership does not change the amount of television viewing during both periods. It seems that viewing intensity has a correlation with the amount of television viewing during week days ($p<.01$), however, further analysis shows no linearity in the changes. Interestingly, two expectedly extreme groups (non-owners and heavy viewers) have equal rates and only the moderate VCR viewers watch significantly more television than the light viewers. In addition, comparisons between four socio-economic groups of only VCR owners and only non-owners exhibit equally interesting results. From the VCR owners only the lower social class have higher television viewing rate than other three groups, while no difference has been established between the television viewing rates of various social classes that do not own video sets.

Briefly speaking, these results do not attribute any changes in the amount of television viewing of the sample to VCRs. It is apparent that the respondents spend almost equal amount of time watching television programmes during weekdays or holidays. This is regardless of the fact that they are of various socio-economic backgrounds, may or may not own a VCR and may have differing amounts of VCR

viewing. In other words, the VCR owners and, more interestingly, the heavier VCR user do not shorten the time they spend watching national channels and their VCR viewing is simply added to their usual television viewing.

Table 8.8- Television Viewing During Weekdays and Weekends*

	Television Viewing (hour per day)					Total
	never	rarely	once	two or three	four or more	
<u>Social Classes (SES):</u>						
lower	0 (0)	9 (3)	28 (22)	47 (45)	35 (49)	119
lower-middle	0 (1)	18 (7)	63 (46)	96 (87)	51 (87)	228
upper-middle	2 (5)	11 (7)	46 (22)	51 (59)	35 (52)	145
upper	2 (1)	4 (4)	17 (7)	17 (23)	11 (16)	51
<u>VCR Ownership & Viewing Intensity:</u>						
non-owners	1 (2)	25 (9)	73 (50)	90 (96)	71 (103)	260
light viewers	0 (1)	11 (7)	38 (22)	35 (43)	22 (33)	106
moderate viewers	0 (1)	2 (2)	22 (12)	46 (47)	20 (28)	90
heavy viewers	3 (3)	4 (3)	21 (13)	40 (28)	19 (40)	87
Total	4 (7)	42 (21)	154 (97)	211 (214)	132 (204)	543 (543)

*The numbers within parentheses show the amount of television viewing during weekends.

Conclusion: The results on the sample's use of national mass media is quite surprising. It has been found that ownership of a video set is positively correlated with newspaper purchase and readership as well as magazine readership. In addition, the amount of VCR viewing does not affect newspaper purchase and readership but, surprisingly, a higher intensity of VCR use results in a higher rate of magazine readership. Therefore, it is concluded that, contrary to some speculations, video sets and cassettes do not contribute to an increase of dislike for reading in the society. It has been

found that VCR owners (regardless of their socio-economic status) tend to listen to radio programmes less frequently while they go to cinema more than the non owners. Also, surprisingly, it has been found that heavier VCR users go to movies more than the moderate and light users. Furthermore, it has been found that VCR ownership and viewing intensity do not affect the respondents' use of national television channels during weekdays or weekends.

The Impact of the length of VCR Ownership

Here some of the changes in the sample population's VCR use patterns and habits which may occur during long periods of ownership is studied. Primarily, it was assumed that the use patterns of the VCR owners change as the length of ownership increases. However, it is possible to suggest that the length of ownership is a factor which conceals other reasons for changes. These reasons for changes in time can be numerous and may include factors such as a decline in the early 'fascination' of the owners with the technology, a lack or shortage of adequate preferred content in the market, and an increase in the knowledge of the owners on how more effectively to satisfy their more elaborate desires. Also, the age of the respondents and their particular educational status may attribute to the changes. Here, some data on the respondents' subjective evaluation on changes associated with length of VCR ownership are presented and then the data on actual changes are discussed. Here, as discussed in the beginning of the previous section, the problem of causality is relevant and so any proven relationship should be regarded as mere covariation. Although the problem could be avoided using partial correlation and multiple regression analysis, again because of shortage of time and space this has been omitted.

Length of VCR Ownership and Amount of VCR Viewing

The respondents were required to indicate if they thought that, compared to five years earlier for example, the amount of their VCR viewing and the diversity of content type they viewed had changed. The analysis here is based on two types of information: the subjective evaluations of the respondents themselves and the actual calculated

changes in their VCR viewing. According to the sample, 47 students (17% of 277 valid cases) indicated that they watched more programmes compared to five years earlier and another 57 (20.6%) replied that the amount of their VCR viewing has not changed. The majority of respondents (n=173, 62.5%) revealed that they watched comparatively fewer programmes. Also on the changes of the types of content watched, 57.2 percent (n=159) indicated some kind of change while 42.8 percent (n=119) reported no changes. From the 159 respondents who believed that the content they watched had changed compared to five years earlier, 112 (77.2%) indicated that now they viewed less limited and more diverse programmes while only 17 (11.7%) believed they were watching more limited and less diverse content. The rest of the sample (n=30, 19.9%) did not answer this question or their answers were inconclusive. Further analysis shows that the changes in the amount of VCR viewing and type of content viewed occurred regardless of social class and viewing intensity. In other words, respondents from various socio-economic backgrounds and viewing intensity reported similar changes (all calculated chi-squares as well as t-tests between pairs of groups are insignificant).

It was hypothesised that the amount of VCR viewing has a negative relationship with the length of ownership, that is the former declines as the length of ownership increases. The data shows that the viewing intensity is not correlated with the length of ownership ($\chi^2=10.492$; $df=12$; $p=.5729$). In other words, respondents with different amount of VCR viewing activity (light, moderate and heavy viewers) are found almost equally among groups with various lengths of VCR ownership. Since the (length of) VCR ownership has been proved to be positively associated with socio-economic status, another test is performed to determine whether the amount of viewing varies among different social classes. Again, the result reveals that the respondents with different viewing intensity are equally distributed among all social classes ($\chi^2=4.925$; $df=6$; $p=.5535$). Also, further tests show that these findings are similar for both male and female respondents and sex does not play any role. Briefly speaking, contrary to the research hypothesis, it is found that the amount of VCR viewing is a relatively stable factor and does not vary by the length of ownership as it is not associated with the sex and socio-economic background of the students.

Length of VCR Ownership and VCR Content Preferences

The research hypothesis indicated that with longer periods of VCR ownership the VCRs' use for viewing of non-entertainment material (that is, educational-informative) will increase. The following results come from the information on up to three video content preferences of the sample (presented in table 8.4 which discusses the ritualistic uses of VCRs). Here again the eight categories of video content are classified into main educational-informative and entertainment groups. The tests show that respondents with different lengths of VCR ownership are likely to choose entertainment content as their first and third options. But, there seems to exist a significant difference between the groups as their second choice: The newer VCR owners are likely to use more educational-informative content than the older users ($\chi^2=14.95$; $df=6$; $p=.0207$). However, there is no complete positive relationship between length of VCR ownership and choice of non-entertaining content as the second preference.

In another test for each group of the main content types, a separate accumulated numeric value is calculated based on a higher importance of the first choice (x3) plus a moderate importance of the second choice (x2) plus the third choice. This method is adopted to quantify, though very cautiously, the content preferences of the sample. In this method a total score of 12 is divided into maximum 6 scores for each of the categories. The calculated means shows that there is a curve relationship between length of VCR ownership and content preferences, although the variance between groups is very small and therefore the total statistical significance is marginal ($p=.0604$ for educational-informative and $p=.0904$ for the entertainment content). Further tests show that the importance of entertainment programmes increases slightly from the newer VCR owners to those who have had access to VCRs for almost up to a decade. Then, it decreases again for those who have owned VCR between 10 and 16-17 years and again it increases for the oldest VCR owners. The reverse description is valid for the importance of educational-informative content (see table 8.4). Briefly speaking, the respondents primarily prefer entertaining content and this does not seem to vary significantly ($p<.01$) between the groups of VCR owners according to their length of ownership. However, the marginal difference is not simply a linear correlation and shows some wavering, though these results must be considered with less certainty.

Comparatively speaking, the earliest and the last groups of VCR owners along with those who obtained their sets around fifteen years ago are more likely to use educational programmes. While those who have had their sets for between 5 to ten years or more than 17-18 years are likely to prefer entertainment.

Length of VCR Ownership, Time-Shifting & Library Building Activities

It was expected that a longer period of VCR ownership would be associated with higher rates of time-shifting and library building activities. According to the data obtained from the sample, it is found that time-shifting occurs with a similar frequency among students with different length of VCR ownership ($\chi^2=23.755$; $df=24$; $p=.4756$). This means that the 43 percent of the respondents who attempt to record television programmes between at least once to more than ten times a year belong to groups with various VCR ownership duration. Thus, the respondents' increased familiarity from VCRs' potential does not significantly inspire them to record more television offerings. However, the one-way ANOVA test reveals that only the first VCR owners (who obtained their sets before 1976) are more likely to attempt time-shifting compared to the newest VCR owners (with a purchase year between 1992-1994). No other significant difference is found between other groups.

On the other hand, the gathered data indicates that the number of video cassettes owned is positively correlated with the length of VCR ownership ($\chi^2=88.7176$; $df=42$; $p<.01$). In other words, it is highly possible that families with a longer period of access to VCRs have collected more cassettes at their homes. But, it is established that the amount of family films out of the total number of cassettes owned does not seem to be correlated with the length of VCR ownership. Here, although the total probability is not significant for the whole sample ($\chi^2=90.2616$; $df=80$; $p=.2030$), the one-way ANOVA test confirms that families who obtained their sets between 1980 and 1982 tend to have more family films compared to families who purchased their sets after 1989.

Length of VCR Ownership and Parental Control

In the research design it was hypothesised that the longer ownership is correlated with, and even results in, more developed parental control methods. It should be noted that a developed control is problematic since it involves the quantity/frequency of various control measures as well as the quality of more subtle and effective, though limited, types of methods. Both of these issues are discussed here as much as the information can be manipulated. The required analysis is mainly based on a scale of 13 statements on parental control as well as two statements of activities carried out by family members. The latter consists of zipping and shifting channels while viewing scenes considered unsuitable for the family. These activities are supposed to have been initiated and approved by the parents or older siblings at home.

The data gathered from the research questionnaires reveals that VCR viewing is an activity restrained by a relatively high rate of parental control, mediation and rule-making. As table 8.9 shows, at least 50 percent of the VCR owning respondents are more often subjected to most of the indicated control methods by their parents. From the list of 15 statements only three are considered as less popular measures. These are the measures which are never or rarely used by more than 50 percent of the families. More than half of the students indicated that their video sets are never or rarely kept in a locked place, that they have to obtain permission every time they wanted to use VCRs, and that their parents try to prevent or discourage them from watching VCR altogether.

For the statistical analysis of the relevant variables several steps have been taken. The scores for all 15 statements are added up so that a higher total score is attributed to a higher parental control. This score shows the quantitative intensity of control measures. Here, primarily, chi-square tests are performed between the parental control and length of VCR ownership as well as the familial class background and the viewing intensity of the respondents. These tests show that there are overall significant differences (all $p < .01$) between the amount of parental control imposed by various groups of families on the bases of their length of VCR ownership, social class, or viewing intensity. But these tests do not indicate the direction of correlation. Therefore, further tests are performed using the one-way ANOVA method. Here, it should be mentioned that the result of this method is absolutely reliable since all of the four relevant variables (parental control,

SES, viewing intensity, and length of VCR ownership) are interval or even ratio levels of measurement. The one-way ANOVA tests determines significant differences between pairs of VCR owners grouped according to their class background, viewing intensity and length of VCR ownership.

According to the results, the accumulated amount of parental control is negatively correlated with the length of VCR ownership ($p < .01$). This means that the newer VCR owners are more likely to impose more control methods more frequently than the earlier VCR buyers. It is also confirmed that those with a VCR ownership duration between 1 to 9 years have higher scores than those who obtained their sets between 1980 and 1982. It is also found that parental control is a highly class-based phenomenon ($p < .01$). This implies that the lower social classes have higher rates of parental control than the higher social classes. All of the comparisons between pairs of social classes seem valid ($p \leq .05$). The lower social class more than other three classes, the lower-middle class more than the two upper classes and the upper-middle class more than the upper class tend to impose higher levels of control measures more frequently on their children's VCR viewing. Yet, again interestingly, the amount of family control is more negatively associated with a higher level of viewing intensity ($p < .01$). This means that respondents who tend to view fewer video programmes less frequently are more likely to face more restrictive methods from their parents more often: the light viewers more than other two groups and the moderate viewers more than the heavy viewers. This result implies that a higher control by the parents may have, directly or indirectly, resulted in their children's lesser VCR viewing.

In addition, the quality of parental control has been measured by two methods: less use of direct, preventive and harsh methods as well as the respondents positive evaluation of the necessity of controls imposed by their parents. Out of the 15 control measures, the following six are considered by the researcher as direct and harsh methods: keeping VCR in a locked place, inspecting the films before showing them, disrupting programmes, zipping, changing television channel or turning it off and preventing youngsters from using VCRs altogether. Interestingly enough, these methods are not very popular among the sample (see table 8.9). Also, according to the statistical tests, these methods are not correlated with the length of VCR ownership, although they are negatively correlated with SES and viewing intensity. This means that parents according

to their socio-economic background may adopt more direct and harsh control methods regardless of the length of VCR ownership.

Moreover, in order to assess the quality of parental control, the evaluation of the respondents themselves is used. They were required to evaluate the amount of control imposed by their parents on a 5-point scale from “very harsh” to “very gentle”. Also, they indicated their opinion on the necessity of parental control from “very necessary and useful” to “very un-necessary and harmful”. Analysis of the respondents’ evaluation of the harshness/gentleness of parental control shows no correlation with the length of VCR ownership ($\chi^2=23.1213$; $df=24$; $p=.5126$). This variable, however, is correlated with the amount of harsh control methods and viewing intensity ($p<.01$ and $p<.05$). The ANOVA tests reveal interesting results. There is a very strong positive correlation between the actual amount of parental control and the respondents evaluation as less gentle and more harsh parental control. The ANOVA test shows that all paired comparison are significantly meaningful and so all groups with higher actual rates believe that the control imposed by their parents is less gentle and more harsh. This implies the factuality of the respondents evaluations. In spite of this, other correlations produce interesting results. The upper class respondents (those actually with the lowest amount of parental control) more than the other three classes believe that the control imposed on them is very gentle. There is no other significant difference between other classes. The heavy viewers (with the lowest rate of parental control) more than the moderate and light viewers believe their parental control is gentle. Findings on the respondents’ opinion on the necessity of the parental control seem equally interesting. The results confirm that a higher rate of parental control actually is associated with a more positive evaluation on the necessity and usefulness of parental control, although the former is more likely to be criticised by the children as less gentle and more harsh on them. This is obvious in the inter-group comparisons. The newest VCR owners (with less than 9 years of ownership and actually those with the highest rate of parental control) more than the earlier VCR buyers are more likely to evaluate parental control as necessary and useful. Also, the lowest social class and the light VCR users (both with the highest amount of control rate) more than the other classes and viewing groups tend to assess their parents’ control methods as necessary and useful. These findings reveal that the respondents accept the existing parental control rate and methods as necessary and useful, although they may express

concern about its harshness. Yet, this is regardless of viewing intensity, SES, and length of VCR ownership.

Conclusion: It is found that the length of ownership is negatively correlated with rate of parental control; that is, the earlier VCR buyers use less control methods, less frequently than later VCR holders. However, this does not unquestionably mean that the amount of parental control among newer owners will decrease during time. This doubt stems from the fact that parental control is a highly class-based phenomenon. The earlier VCR owners impose less parental control methods than the newer buyers, at least it could be said that partially, because of the fact that they are of higher socio-economic status. However, a final assessment on the causal impact of duration of VCR ownership on the amount of parental control requires longitudinal (panel and trend) studies.

On the other hand, light viewers are more likely to appear in the families with a higher level of parental control. Regarding the fact that viewing intensity is not correlated with the length of ownership and SES, it could also be concluded that higher control results in less intensive viewing. According to the data, it also seems reasonable to claim that a higher control rate, including the less gentle and more direct methods, is less likely to create a negative attitude among the children. This claim is supported by the discovery that those with higher control rates still express more positive evaluations on the necessity and usefulness of control methods. Although they are more likely to feel and reflect on the harshness of, particularly some control methods imposed by their parents.

Table 8.9- Frequency of Parental Control Measures

Statements	Frequencies					Total (valid cases)
	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always	
<u>Parents</u>						
1) keep VCR locked up	158	27	19	22	48	274
2) require permission to use VCRs	95	60	28	30	64	277
3) are sensitive to the kind of films and with whom the respondent watches	34	36	42	48	114	274
4) are sensitive to the amount of time the respondent spends watching VCR	28	51	43	68	84	274
5) give priority to studying over watching video	6	5	13	20	232	276
6) control the source of rented and borrowed cassettes	37	41	32	40	120	270
7) are sensitive about when the respondent uses VCR	54	35	44	54	86	273
8) review parts of the films before viewing them with family	74	57	45	35	62	273
9) have discussions on the proper types of films for family viewing	39	45	43	60	87	274
10) disrupt programmes considered unsuitable	46	52	47	47	81	273
11) are anxious about possible negative impacts of the video programmes	24	27	48	47	128	274
12) believe that the life-styles shown in most programmes are not real	18	46	67	65	77	273
13) prevent or discourage the respondent from watching video altogether	99	77	53	22	25	276
14) use fast-forward button through unsuitable scenes	18	22	22	31	165	258
15) change channel or turn the television set off through unsuitable scenes	41	34	42	35	112	264

Chapter IX

Socio-Cultural Effects of VCRs:

Cultivation of non-Traditional Attitudes

As in the previous chapter, this chapter deals with the statistical findings on hypotheses 5 to 8. These are related to the effects of long-term exposure of Iranian youth to video programmes. Also, the role of different socio-cultural factors such as social class, gender, and age as well as some VCR-related elements (e.g., various content genres, language and production country) are studied. A fair understanding of statistical results presented in this chapter requires noting the limited potential of this research to the establishment of causal relationship among the factors (see the relevant discussion in chapter 7). However, this problem is dealt with by using several partial correlation and multiple regression analyses, results of which will be discussed in each section.

The Effects of VCR: Cultivation of Non-Traditional Attitudes

It is generally assumed that the long-term exposure to video programmes has contributed to development of non-traditional attitudes among the sample. This is in the light of the fact that the majority of available video programmes are largely contrary to national mass media content policy and therefore not available on the public broadcasting channels. The video content is imported from America, Europe and film-producing Asian countries (such as India, China and Japan) while the national media programmes articulate the traditional (Islamic-Iranian) culture through domestic productions and strictly selected imports. In order to measure the cultivation of non-traditional (Western) attitudes several statements were designed to show the attitudes of the interviewees on a traditional/non-traditional scale. These statements were chosen to cover attitudes toward sex- and sex-role stereotypes, expectations about the future,

individual-society relations, and occupational aspirations. In short, regarding the length of the questionnaire, the number of final statements was reduced to a mere 19 questions.

One may suggest that the scale of traditional versus non-traditional attitudes is very simplistic and vague. Here, I have no choice but to accept this crucial critique particularly regarding the fact that attitudes, by nature, are very complex structures and their scientific study is an immensely complicated task. However, it should be noted that, concentrating on the cultivation impact and attitudinal changes caused or strengthened by VCRs, the current research is the very first study of its kind in Iran. This means that a more elaborate approach toward the nature and structure of the investigated attitude(s) could only limit the research scope and, at the same time, put a constraint on methodological procedures. Being a pioneering study within its particular context, this academic research could not accommodate additional limitations and complexity in its structure. On the other hand, it primarily seemed that a broader approach toward attitude, although simplistic and vague, is more likely to assist the explorative purposes of this research while a limited focus would deprive it of such possible discoveries.

Traditional versus non-Traditional Attitudinal Scale

As discussed in chapter 7, because of the lack of standardised attitudinal scales in Iran, the research relies on an innovative scale. Therefore, prior to the analysis of the findings on the relationship between attitudinal changes and VCR consumption, several necessary modifications have been carried out which are discussed in advance. First, Factor Analysis and Cluster Analysis (by variable) are performed repeatedly to determine the pattern of interrelationships between answers provided by the respondents. The findings reveal that it is more plausible to divide the 19 statements into 6 categories which are titled as attitudes toward:

- (a) *non-traditional marriage* (statements 4, 5, 8 and 17);
- (b) *free pre-marital sexual relations* (statements 3, 9 and 10);
- (c) *gender socialisation of youth* (statements 1, 2, 6 and 7);
- (d) *learning languages* (statements 11, 12 and 13);
- (e) *VCR and DBS policies of the state* (statements 14 and 18); and
- (f) *individual-society relations* (statements 15, 16 and 19).

Second, the codes of answers have been modified. Statements 8, 9, 10, and 16 (see table 9.1 and also Section Two, Research Questionnaire, Appendix A) which have only four-optional answers are transformed into usual 5-point scales, omitting the 'average' option (3). Also, the answers for Statement 17 (on up to four main characteristics of an ideal spouse) has been changed regarding the importance and traditional vs. non-traditional type of the characteristics. Furthermore, all questions are recoded so that a higher score presumably shows a higher level of non-traditional attitude.

Also, various Kendall's *tau-b* rank correlation (τ) are performed to determine the validity of each statement which is measured at ordinal level (see table 9.1). The results reveal that only Statement 15 (overall satisfaction with life) does not have correlations at a statistically meaningful level ($p \leq .05$ according to statistical tests of χ^2 , t , and τ) with any of the relevant factors of VCR ownership, SES, length of VCR ownership, and viewing intensity. This means that the respondents have given almost similar answers regardless of their socio-economic status, access to VCR, length of ownership and viewing intensity. In other words, there are no meaningful variances between groups of each variable and that the overall patterns of answers do not imply any understandable causal interrelationship or covariance of the attitudinal statement with the factors. At varying degrees, other statements show significant correlations with at least one of the factors.

As to the analysis of the six attitudes, several tests have been carried, out of which the findings are discussed here. The attitude toward non-traditional marriage is correlated with socio-economic status of the respondents and with their access to VCR ($p < .001$ with χ^2 and τ and t -tests). In other words, higher social classes and VCR owners are very likely to have more non-traditional attitudes toward marriage than the lower social classes and those who do not own a video set. The One-Way Anova tests show that the upper class more than other classes and the middle classes more than the lower class hold non-traditional attitudes. But, length of VCR ownership and the intensity of viewing apparently do not affect the audiences attitudes toward marriage. However, One-Way Anova tests between pairs of groups reveal that the heavy viewers (which are more likely to be found among all social classes with various length of VCR

ownership) believe in a more non-traditional marriage than the moderate and light viewers. On the other hand, only those with 13 to 15 years of VCR ownership (those with the highest SES) more than those who have purchased their sets after 1989 believe in a less traditional marriage. A further *t*-test shows that boys more than girls tend to express a less traditional attitude toward marriage. ($p<.01$).

The performed tests confirm that attitude toward free, pre-marital sexual relations is likely to increase as the respondents' socio-economic status and, for the VCR owners, the intensity of VCR viewing and length of ownership increases (all at $p<.01$). Also, One-Way Anova tests confirm that the two upper classes more than the two lower classes, the heavy viewers more than the light and moderate VCR users, and those with 16 to 18 years of VCR ownership more than all other groups are likely to believe that free, pre-marital sexual relations are acceptable for boys and girls and that discos are proper, and show the development, of the society. In addition, boys have expressed a more non-traditional opinion than girls (*t*-test $p<.001$).

The findings on attitudes toward the gender socialisation of youth seem to be interesting. According to the results of the statistical tests, the respondents' attitudinal score is not correlated with their socio-economic status and so all social classes hold similar opinions. But, compared to the non-owners, VCR owners are more likely to believe in non-traditional up-bringing of boys and girls (*t*-test $p<.05$). Also, it is found that the heavy and moderate viewers are more likely to take a less traditional stand than the light viewers while length of ownership does not affect the attitudinal scores. Yet, female students seem to express a more non-traditional attitude toward socialisation than the male students. The analysis of this attitude clearly demonstrates that a heavy VCR viewing has been effective while SES and length of VCR ownership seem not have been significant factors.

The respondents' answers to the three designed questions on the importance of learning Persian calligraphy, and European as well as Arabic languages seem to be widely scattered. It was assumed that with the increase in the four factors the importance of learning Persian calligraphy and Arabic language will decrease while learning languages such as French and English will be considered as more vital. Almost all respondents have expressed similar opinions on the importance of a beautiful Persian hand-writing and its

mere correlation with the factor of length of VCR ownership may only be a shadow association. However, the added scores of the three statements yield the following results. The two higher social classes more than the two lower groups (χ^2 and $\tau p < .001$), the VCR owners more than the non-owners (t -test $p < .001$), the heavy viewers more than the light viewers (χ^2 and $\tau p < .05$) and those with 13 to 18 years of VCR ownership more than those with less than six years of VCR use (χ^2 and $\tau p < .001$) believe that learning Arabic is less important while learning European languages is more crucial. Also, there is no difference between boys and girls in their attitudes toward the linguistic subjects.

The findings on the attitude toward the VCR and DBS policies of the state reveal that the two middle and the upper classes more than the lower social class (χ^2 and $\tau p < .001$) and the VCR owners more than the non-owners (χ^2 and $t p < .001$) are likely to believe that ownership of a VCR does not connote an opposition to the state policies and that prohibition of VCR and satellite receivers by the state are against the public interests. But, the amount of VCR use and the length of VCR ownership do not affect the attitude scores, while in all groups the male respondents tend to express a more non-traditional attitude than the female respondents.

The statistical tests for attitude toward individual-society relations have failed to show any significant correlation between the scores and the four factor. This is despite the fact that there were some correlations between two of the relevant statements and the factors. Apparently, these correlations have disappeared when the scores of the two significant statements are added up.

Table 9.1- Matrix of Correlations of Attitudinal Statements with SES, VCR Ownership, Viewing Intensity & Length of VCR Ownership (based on χ^2 and Kendall's τ -b; τ)††

Statements	SES	VCR Ownership†	Viewing Intensity	Length of VCR Ownership
1) believe that girls and boys should be raised differently	* (**)	n.s.	n.s. (*)	n.s.
2) believe that girls and boys should always consider social standards regarding their appearance and clothes	n.s. (**)	* (**)	n.s.	* (n.s.)
3) agree that a disco is right, and shows the development, of the society	**	**	*	n.s. (**)
4) believe that love is the best way for choosing a spouse	n.s. (**)	n.s. (**)	n.s.	* (**)
5) believe free relations before marriage obstructs a happy marriage	n.s. (**)	* (**)	n.s.	n.s. (*)
6) wish to be able to play jazz and other non-traditional musical instruments skilfully	n.s.	**	n.s. (**)	n.s.
7) believe that Western dances belong to the nihilistic and corrupt culture of Western youth	n.s. (*)	**	*	n.s.
8) reaction toward his/her spouse's pre-marital friendship with others	n.s.	**	n.s.	n.s.
9) believe that pre-marital sexual relation is acceptable for boys	*	**	*	*
10) believe that pre-marital sexual relation is acceptable for girls	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	**
11) believe that a beautiful Persian calligraphy is very important	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s. (*)
12) believe that learning European languages is very important	**	n.s. (*)	n.s.	n.s. (*)
13) believe that learning Arabic is very important	**	**	**	**
14) believe that owning and using VCR means opposition to the cultural ideals of the state	* (**)	**	n.s.	n.s.
15) feel satisfied with his/her overall educational, health, economic, familial and political situations	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
16) think either knowledge or money is more important for happiness	n.s.	**	**	n.s.
17) characteristics of an ideal spouse	**	**	*	**
18) believe that prohibition of VCR and DBS by the state is wrong	n.s. (**)	* (**)	n.s.	n.s. (**)
19) think that most people are trustworthy	n.s.	* (n.s.)	n.s.	n.s.

Key: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; n.s. not significant; † also based on t -test; †† The significance of τ is shown within parentheses if it differs from the calculated χ^2 .

VCR-related and social factors of attitude

The scores of all 18 statements are added up so that a single 'traditional/non-traditional attitudinal scale' is produced. This scale is considered as an interval level measurement. According to this scale a higher score shows an overall more non-traditional and less traditional attitude toward the six socio-political and cultural issues conveyed in the traditional/non-traditional attitude scale. The performed Pearson's r bivariate correlation test between the four main factors studied throughout the research (SES, VCR ownership, viewing intensity, length of VCR ownership) as well as gender, age and grade produces the following results. Attitude is very likely to be affected by the first five factors (respectively, $r = .3190$; $.3248$; $.3520$; $.3842$; all at $p < .001$ and $.1142$ at $p < .01$). Yet, there are no significant correlations with age and grade of the respondents ($r = -.0652$ and $-.0539$ respectively, both not significant). All other statistical tests reveal that a more non-traditional attitude is significantly associated with a higher socio-economic status (χ^2 and $r p < .001$). Thus, according to One-Way Anova analysis, all paired comparisons are meaningful and so each of the higher social classes is more likely than all lower classes to express a non-traditional attitude. The VCR owners tend to take a more non-traditional stand than the non-owners (χ^2 and $t p < .001$).

It has been found that the length of VCR ownership is significantly correlated with a more non-traditional attitude (χ^2 and $r p < .001$). Those with 13 to 18 years of VCR ownership (those with the highest SES scores) are also more likely to express more non-traditional/less traditional attitude than those with less than 12 years of VCR ownership. But, since it is a highly class-based phenomenon, at this level of analysis and merely based on chi-square and r tests, 'no dependent role' can not be attributed to the length of VCR ownership. Furthermore, interestingly, the heavy VCR users who are to be found almost equally among all social classes¹⁴⁰ more than the light and moderate viewers tend to give answers that are categorised as a more non-traditional attitude. This reveals an important finding that a higher amount of VCR viewing by itself contributes to

¹⁴⁰ It should be noted here that at first appearance social class seems to be positively associated with viewing intensity ($r = .3059$; $r\text{-square} = .0936$; $p < .001$). But, further analysis reveals that length of VCR ownership itself is more likely to affect viewing intensity ($r = .6877$; $r\text{-square} = .4730$; $p < .001$) than SES. When both variables are entered in a multiple regression analysis, the explanatory potential of SES is reduced significantly while length of ownership seems to be a better variable to explain variation in the viewing intensity (total $r\text{-square} = .4731$; $p < .001$).

the development of non-traditional attitudes, although socio-economic status itself is associated with a less traditional opinion and with a higher rate of VCR ownership. In other words, although the higher social classes (which may or may not own a VCR) and the VCR owners who belong to different classes express strongest non-traditional attitudes, the heavier video users express the least traditional opinions on studied subjects.

These findings can also be supported by multiple regression analysis. For this analysis, initially seven factors which possibly affect attitudes have been entered in the regression equation one by one¹⁴¹. According to the results (summarised in table 9.2), age and grade seem to have negative correlations with a more non-traditional attitude ($\beta = -.0695$ and $\beta = -.0391$ respectively). This means that older students in higher grades tend to give more traditional answers compared to the younger respondents. But, the overall correlations are not statistically significant ($r^2 = .005$ and $= .0015$ with F significance $= .111$ and $.363$, respectively). This may be partially for the fact that the sample students are chosen only from high schools and the variance of their age and grade is very limited. In separate equations with each single factor, the remaining five factors show significant coefficients with the attitudinal score. This simply means that the four main factors in the research as well as gender can most probably explain a relatively great deal of changes in attitudes expressed by the sample. It should be noted that gender is correlated with attitude ($p < .01$) so that girls are more likely to be less non-traditional than boys. However, the role of gender is only less than 2% percent of all explained variation in attitude ($r^2 = .0139$).

According to results of the multiple regression analysis for all the sample population (including both VCR owners and non-owners), the five entered factors explain overall 46 percent of the variation in the attitudes expressed by the respondents ($F = 29.67$; $p < .001$). Also, *R-square* (R^2 , i.e., the certain explained proportion of variation in the dependent variable of attitude) is 21.8% which is a relatively successful result. This means that at least 21.8 percent of the variation of the attitudes expressed by

¹⁴¹ In the equation of multiple regression analysis, gender and VCR ownership are treated as binomial variables.

the sample is very likely attributable to, and explainable by, the five factors altogether, although they have different dependent roles.

Table 9.2- Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Between Attitude and Seven factors (SES, VCR Ownership, Viewing Intensity, Length of VCR Ownership, Gender, Age & Grade)

Factors	Coefficient (β)	R-Square (R^2)	F	Sig. F
1) socio-economic status	.3200	.1024	61.837	.001
2) VCR ownership	.3198	.1022	61.725	.001
3) viewing intensity	.3610	.1303	81.198	.001
4) length of VCR ownership	.3946	.1557	98.841	.001
5) gender	.1177	.0139	7.609	.01
6) age	-.0695	.0049	2.552	.111
7) grade	-.0391	.0015	.830	.363

These findings are based on the role of single factors in the formation of attitudes among the respondents. This method is misleading because it can not determine the definite role of each factor in the development of non-traditional attitudes. This problem stems from the fact that the analysis does not calculate the degree of interplay between the factors which are not totally independent from each other and have are some proven interdependence. For example, consider the class-based distinction of VCR ownership which is also reflected in the length of ownership. This means that no undisputed causal relationship can be claimed. This problem could be overcome using multiple regression analysis. In order to solve this problem, all the five factors have been entered in the regression equation using various Stepwise and Backward methods with two different orders. This is because of the fact that the order of variables entered in the equation can result in differing amounts of coefficients. This can be a problematic since the final statistics (R^2 and β) are the basic determinants of the comparative importance of each factor. The five factors are entered in the regression equation according to their 'historical order': gender, SES and VCR ownership (interchangeably in two separate orders), length of VCR ownership and viewing intensity. Here, the final results of the various multiple regression analyses for the whole sample are presented. With a mere .077 of explanatory potential, gender is the least important factor while ownership of a

VCR is responsible for .285 of variation. Socio-economic status can explain a good deal of attitudinal variation: a unit of change in SES of the respondents increases .178 of a unit of variation in attitude. With a .232 coefficient, the length of ownership is also an important factor in the expression of a more non-traditional/less traditional attitude. But, the highest Beta belongs to the viewing intensity (.41). This implies that a higher amount of video viewing (disregarding the type of content or other relevant variables) is a more important factor in the formation and expression of a more non-traditional attitude than the socio-economic status of the respondents, their VCR ownership, gender and length of VCR ownership. Also, it should be noted that the coefficients of SES, VCR ownership and length of ownership vary greatly depending on the number and order of variables in the equation. This is because these variables are very closely correlated to each other, while gender and viewing intensity are relatively independent from the other factors.¹⁴²

In addition, the multiple regression analysis for those who have not obtained a VCR appears to be valid ($F= 5.328$; $p=.005$). This is despite the fact that the factors in the equation are reduced to SES and gender (respectively $\beta=.146$ and $\beta=.127$; both at $p<.05$). However, these two variables are only able to explain 4% of the variation of attitude ($R^2=.04$). A similar test for the 284 VCR owners yields more interesting results ($R^2=.2125$; $F= 11.85$; $p<.001$). The respondents' amount of video viewing, length of ownership and socio-economic status are respectively most important factors that can explain the proportion of variation in the attitude expressed by them (β respectively .254; .225; and .220 all at $p<.001$). But, the gender of the VCR owning respondents has no effect on their attitudinal stand ($\beta=.019$; $p=.72$). This is despite the fact that gender played a significant role when all the sample or, more importantly, those who do not own a video set were considered. This implies that viewing intensity, length of VCR ownership and SES of the VCR owners are more important in the transformation of their attitudes than their gender. In other words, among the VCR owners, boys and girls are more likely to express similar non-traditional attitudes if other factors are consistent -that is, if they have owned VCRs for equal number of years, they have equal amount of video

¹⁴² For a better understanding of the relative importance of the five factors one must consider that ownership of a VCR and gender have only two values while the variances of interval measures of SES, length of VCR ownership, viewing intensity, and attitudinal scores are 15, 20, 22, and 47, respectively. The constant is 30.628. These statistics are also essential if prediction is intended.

viewing and belong to similar social classes. This is against the fact that among those who do not own a video set, gender is a significant factor and girls are more traditional than boys. This preliminary finding will be discussed in the next section.

As far as the problem of causality is concerned several things must be noted here. The results of multiple regression analysis can not be considered absolute if no additional assumptions are provided regarding the interrelationships between the variables. In this research three types of causal relations are assumed (or more precisely distinguished) between attitude and the five independent variables:

I) It seems highly reasonable to assume that the effects of SES and gender on attitudes are causal. First, these variables are understandably not affected in reverse by the attitude. Second, they precede attitude in time and can not be altered as an effect of changes in the respondents attitudes. Third, their correlations with attitudinal variation have not been confirmed to be spurious, since their coefficients are not eliminated in the regression equation.

II) Ownership of a VCR and, therefore, length of VCR ownership can be also cautiously regarded as (at least 'conditional') causal variables. This judgement relies on the fact that, on the one hand, their coefficients have survived the test of multiple regression. This means that they play independent roles in the (trans)formation of attitudes separate from those entered in the equation. But on the other hand, this does not mean that they are free from interference from other variables which have not been included in this study. The conditional causality of these two variables is proposed here in the light of some theoretically, or at least anecdotally, justifiable considerations. It is highly assumed that VCR ownership and so the length of VCR ownership in Iranian society already have correlations with attitudes. This implies that the early VCR owning families who also have longer VCR ownership periods are more from the higher social classes who presumably already had more non-traditional attitudes before they purchased their sets.

In other words, VCR ownership as well as length of ownership have latent causal relations with the families of the respondents. But, this correlation is not eliminated since only the socio-economic status of the respondents' families were entered in the multiple regression equation. While the role of family is not exactly their socio-economic status

since the cultural and attitudinal status of the families are not included here. (These have been studied using questionnaire B for the parents but have not been analysed for this report.) Therefore, it is assumed that the families (parents and elder siblings) of those early VCR buyers already have more non-traditional attitudes which can be associated (i.e., causally related) to a more non-traditional attitude expressed by the respondent. In brief, the direct and indirect impact of attitudinal stands of parents and elder siblings of the respondents on the respondents' attitudes are not studied here. This is crucial particularly when we consider that the family members' attitudes indirectly play determining role in the decision to purchase a VCRs itself.

III) The positive correlation between the viewing intensity and attitude is problematic too. It is well established that those with a more non-traditional attitude have a higher amount of VCR use but this does not mean that the latter is, by itself, a definite 'cause' of the former. This is because, as one may argue, an intensified use develops a more non-traditional attitude and, in turn, a higher non-traditional attitude results in an intensified VCR use. The relationship between attitude and viewing intensity is not One-Way and so one can not claim that viewing intensity 'causes' some changes in attitudes because any change in attitude can also cause change in the viewing intensity. This problematic situation -which can be named a 'reciprocal causality'¹⁴³- can not be resolved without longitudinal data to establish real time-ordered sequence between the two variables which reciprocally act as cause and effect. However, in this research viewing intensity is considered a 'cause' as well as an 'effect' of attitudinal scores and, therefore, it must be dealt with cautiously.

Conclusion: Briefly speaking, the five factors are able to explain at least 21.8% of attitudinal variation among the sample students. It is also found that the respondents' intensity of video viewing has been a more important factor in the formation of their attitudes than their socio-economic status, ownership of VCR, length of ownership or gender.

¹⁴³ This type is also called a 'bicausal relationship' (see, e.g., Birnbaum, 1981), although it includes suspected causal relationships between the independent variables as well as between the dependent and one or more of the independent variables.

Social Distinction of Cultivation by VCR

It has been assumed that various social groups (based on social class, age and gender) have differing degrees of vulnerability to the cultivation impact of long-term exposure to video contents. In this regard, it was discussed that gender, socio-economic status, VCR ownership, viewing intensity and length of VCR ownership are certainly among the factors which can explain a relatively good deal of variation of attitudes expressed by the sample. It was also found that, somehow unexpectedly, age of the respondents did not affect their attitudinal scores. Having analysed these findings, in this section I will try discuss the role of age, gender and SES in the formation of attitudes in more details -as much as the research data and the abilities of statistical tests permit.

Cultivation by VCRs and Age

The conclusion that age does not play a role in the (trans)formation of attitudes is misleading. It should only be interpreted as that 'the respondents with 13 to 22 years of age (mean 16.3) express similar attitudes regardless of their age'. But, apparently this result is not related to the role of VCR ownership and, more importantly, to the role of length of ownership. The age factor in the previous analysis was merely the respondents' age at the time of the fieldwork (January-March 1995). This simple factor does not reflect the cultivation impact of *long-term* exposure to video content. To put it simply, it seems necessary to replace the age factor with the more theoretically sound factor of length of exposure. On the other hand, the factor length of VCR ownership is misleading too, at least because it only reflects the length of VCR ownership by the respondents' families which may even exceed the respondents' age. Therefore, in order to study the effects of long-term exposure to video content, the two variables of age and length of VCR ownership must be replaced with more justifiable variables. For this purpose, two new variables are invented: a) the respondent's age at the time of first VCR purchase and b) number of years lived with VCRs.

These two variables can erase the problems related to the use of the simplistic factors of the respondents' age (at the time of research) and length of VCR ownership (by their families). The respondent's age at the time of first VCR purchase and number of years lived with VCRs are directly related to, and clearly can reflect, the cultivation

impacts of video sets and cassettes. It should be noted that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. A lower age at the time of first VCR purchase means that the respondent has lived a longer number of years with the set ($r = .9542$; $p < .001$). But, these variables do not overlap and, on the bases of theoretical and methodological considerations, can not be used interchangeably. This is because of the fact that the range of the respondents age at the time of fieldwork can distract the effect of these factors. This implies that, for example, two respondents with a similar year of VCR purchase would show equal number of years lived with a video set while they may have been of different ages at the time of VCR purchase. Therefore, these respondents may have lived with a VCR since childhood or early adolescence and so, presumably, have had various levels of vulnerability to the video content they are exposed to.

These results show that 16 respondents (5.9% of 272 valid cases) were born into families who already owned a VCR. Also, respectively 48 (17.7%), 62 (22.8%), and 122 (45%) respondents owned a VCR at ages less than 5 years, 6-10 and 11-15 years. In addition, 24 (8.8%) of the (recent) VCR owners were 16 or more years old when they obtained a video set. On the other hand, 151 respondents (55.5%) have lived less than 5 years with a video set while 54 (1.9%) and 55 (20.2%) have spent 6-10 and 11-15 years with a video set. Only 12 respondents (4.4%) have lived 16 or more years with a VCR.

Applied analyses proved the invented factors to be successful. Tests of chi-square revealed that both variables show noticeable differences (both at $p < .001$). A bivariate correlation analysis shows that the attitudinal scores of the respondents are strongly related to their age at first VCR purchase ($-.3312$; $p < .001$) as well as number of years lived with a set ($.3364$; $p < .001$). This means that those who have lived in VCR homes since an earlier age and have lived more years with a video set are more likely to express more non-traditional/less traditional attitudes.

As another analysis a multiple regression is performed to determine, in spite of the strong interrelationship between them, whether both of the invented variables have distinguishable explanatory potential and, if so, which is a more important factor in the (trans)formation of attitudes. For this the variables are entered in the regression equation separately and together. According to the results, age at first VCR purchase is able to explain almost 11% of variation in attitudes ($R^2 = .1097$; Sig. $F < .001$) while the number

of years lived with VCR shows a slightly stronger explanatory potential ($R^2 = .1132$; Sig. $F < .001$). The explanatory potential of both variables when entered together in the equation increases slightly to 11.4% ($R^2 = .1143$) and it seems that, based on their comparative coefficients, the number of years lived with VCR is a more reliable factor than age at first VCR purchase (β respectively .2290 and -11.25). But, both of the variables seem to be invalid ($p > .05$). This is because their strong interrelationship neutralises each other's role when both are entered in the regression equation. Therefore, based on these results it should be suggested that these variables can be used interchangeably and it seems that the number of years is a better factor than the respondents' age at the time of first VCR purchase.

Finally, having used the number of years lived with VCR instead of age and length of VCR ownership, another multiple regression analysis is performed for the entire sample. In this equation VCR ownership is not entered because it is constant. Thus, SES, gender, viewing intensity and number of years lived with VCRs have been entered in the equation. According to the results, these four variables are altogether likely to explain 21% of attitudinal variation ($R = .4579$; $R^2 = .2097$; $F = 17.706$; Sig. $F < .001$). Regarding the role of each variable, respectively, viewing intensity ($\beta = .2530$), number of years lived with VCR ($\beta = .2247$), and socio-economic status ($\beta = .2079$) play significant roles in the (trans)formation of attitudes (all at $p < .001$), but gender of the respondents seems to be irrelevant to their attitudes ($\beta = .0148$; $p > .05$). As to the interpretation of causal relations it must be said that, as discussed earlier, SES and gender are considered as absolute cause of attitudinal variations while viewing intensity is both a cause and an effect of the attitude. But, the variable number of years lived with a VCR can better be understood as a conditional cause since, like VCR ownership and length of ownership, it seems to be affected by the attitudes of the respondents family members.

Cultivation by VCRs and Gender

It has already been discussed that gender does not appear to have been an important factor in the formation of attitudes among the VCR owners, while girls who do not have constant access to a video set are more likely to be more traditional than non-VCR owning boys. This finding is elaborated here using separate multiple regression

analyses for boys and girls. The variation of attitudes expressed by boys is not strongly dependent on three factors in the equation -SES, number of years lived with VCR and viewing intensity ($R=.3115$; $R^2=.0970$; $F=5.373$; Sig. $F<.01$). In other words, boys most probably learn their attitudes from other socialising agents (e.g., peer groups) than from their families or video sets. Regarding the role of the three factors, the viewing intensity of boys seems to be a more important factor in the (trans)formation of their attitudes compared to their socio-economic status or years lived with VCRs (respectively $\beta=.1951$; $\beta=.1737$; $\beta=.1630$; all at $p<.05$).

On the other hand, girls are more affected by the three factors ($R=.6356$; $R^2=.4039$; $F=25.748$; Sig. $F<.001$). This means that girls gain their attitudinal orientations from their families and video sets. The comparatively high r-square shows that the three factors are very possibly among (if not) *the* most crucial determinants of attitudinal orientations of young girls. One may argue here that this result reflects the fact that in the Iranian culture girls are more attached to their families at least in terms of the time they spend at home. Also since VCRs are home-based entertainment technologies, girls who have lesser contacts with other socialising agents are more likely to gain their attitudes directly from their families and indirectly from their video sets which are utilised inside their homes. The comparative role of the three factors reveals that number of years lived with VCRs is more important than their viewing intensity and socio-economic status (respectively $\beta=.3097$; $\beta=.2912$; $\beta=.2529$; all at $p<.001$). Comparing the role of these factors in the formation of attitudes among boys and girls points to the following 'preliminary' finding. Girls are more likely to be affected by number of years lived with VCR, viewing intensity and SES respectively, while boys are influenced by viewing intensity, SES and number of years lived with a video set. However, it should be clarified that one must resist the temptation of treating the finding as indisputable due to very minimal variations among the coefficients.

Cultivation by VCRs and SES

It has been discussed that social classes show different levels of vulnerability to the VCR-related factors -i.e., VCR ownership, number of years lived with a video set and viewing intensity. In addition, boys and girls with various socio-economic

backgrounds are differently affected by the studied factors. These findings are elaborated here using various multiple regression analyses. Regarding the results of these analyses (see table 9.3) several point can be made.

First, from the lower to the upper social class, the overall explanatory potential of the three factors (years lived with a video set, viewing intensity and gender) increases consistently. In other words, according to the R^2 column in table 9.3, only 10% of variation of attitudes among lower class boys and girls are attributable to these factors while this figure increases to 11.2%, 14.3% and 42.1% for lower-middle, upper-middle and upper class respondents respectively. This also becomes more clear as the significance of F increases and confirms that attitudinal stands of the lower classes are not considerably influenced by the studied factors. With some exceptions, the role of number of years lived with VCR and viewing intensity increases along the SES. This increase is very rapid for girls compared to boys.

Second, the following conclusions are made on the relative importance of the factors. The lower and two upper class respondents are more likely to be affected by the number of years they have owned VCRs than by their viewing intensity. The position of the lower-middle class respondents is reverse. This situation is similar for both boys and girls and so can not be merely attributed to the gender of the respondents. However, the particular pattern of the lower-middle and, to some extent, the upper-middle class may have been caused by some methodological limitations in this research (e.g., the way social class is determined) or may reflect a distinguishable characteristic of the (lower-) middle class in Iran.

Third, comparison between attitudinal scores of boys and girls of various social classes show a steady and consistent increase toward a more non-traditional attitude. But, while this increase is more steady for girls across social classes, the middle-class boys show a relatively modest increase. Therefore, the difference between attitudinal scores of boys and girls narrow among the lower-middle and, more equally, the upper-middle classes while the upper and lower class boys are more non-traditional than their female counterparts. This finding is verifiable by a means of attitudinal scores calculated separately for boys and girls. Out of a possible variance of 18 to 90, the scores of girls among the four classes range from 44.75 for the lower class to 48; 50.93 and 52.97 for

the lower-middle, upper-middle and upper classes respectively. These scores are respectively 48.01; 49.96; 50.71 and 55.23 for boys.

Table 9.3- Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses Between Attitude and Valid Variables by SES and Gender †

	R-Square (R^2)	Gender	Years lived with VCR	viewing intensity	SES
<u>Total Sample</u>	.2094 (***)	.2250 (***)	.2521 (***)	.2086 (***)	.0148
1) lower	.0994	.1989	.1863		.0392
2) lower-middle	.1117 (**)	.0295	.3363 (***)		.0053
3) upper-middle	.1427 (**)	.2930 (**)	.2161 (*)		.0707
4) upper	.4210 (***)	.4981 (**)	.3523 (*)		.2913
<u>Boys</u>	.0970 (**)	.1630 (*)	.1951 (*)	.1737 (*)	
1) lower	.1303	.3112	.1105		
2) lower-middle	.1467 (*)	.1616	.3868 (**)		
3) upper-middle	.0573	.2028	.1570		
4) upper	.1678	.3913	.1218		
<u>Girls</u>	.4039 (***)	.3097 (***)	.2912 (***)	.2529 (**)	
1) lower	.0713	.1166	.2230		
2) lower-middle	.1402 (*)	.1767	.3285 (*)		
3) upper-middle	.2732 (**)	.4128 (**)	.2656 (*)		
4) upper	.7137 (**)	.6021 (**)	.3889 (*)		

Key: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; † based on all valid variables in the equation.
The probability of those without *, ** or *** not significant.

Fourth, somehow surprisingly, viewing intensity seems to be a more important factor among the two lower classes than the number of years lived with a video set. The two upper classes show a reverse condition. This can be attributed to the fact that the lower classes have owned their video sets for, relatively speaking, fewer years and so the amount of VCR use appears as the more determining factor. On the other hand, the two upper social classes have a longer period of VCR ownership and therefore their amount of viewing seems to be a secondary factor. Although this finding may be worth further

research, it can not conclusively and indisputably regarded as pointing to an underlying causal relationship due to the methodological limitations of this research (on this see chapter 7).

In addition, the comparative roles of SES and gender have been studied for those who do not own a video set. This analysis can reveal the role of socio-economic background and gender of the respondents from that section of Iranian society which presumably have not been influenced by video content. It has been discovered that the attitudinal score of those who do not own a video set is very marginally affected by their gender and socio-economic status ($R=.1995$; $R^2=.0398$; $F=5.328$; Sig. $F<.01$). Furthermore, gender appears to be a more important factor than the SES (respectively $\beta=.1455$ and $\beta=.1269$; both at $p<.05$). Also, further analysis reveals that SES is relatively an important factor in the creation of attitudes among girls ($R=.2605$; $R^2=.0679$; $F=10.192$; Sig. $F<.01$) while it fails to determine boys' attitudinal variation at any meaningful level ($R=.0205$; $R^2=.0004$; $F=.0486$; Sig. $F=.826$). This implies that among those who do not own a VCR girls are more likely to be affected by their families while boys learn their attitudes more from other socialising agents. This is consistent with the finding that among the VCR owners, too, the attitudinal scores of girls are more likely to be explained by their socio-economic status as well as VCRs use inside their homes and among their families. Regarding the role of gender among all social classes, it has been found that the attitudes of boys and girls are more likely to differ among the lower social class families. The difference between the two genders narrows among the lower-middle and upper-middle classes but it again increases for the upper class.

Conclusion: In this section it was discussed that the respondents' age at the time of first VCR purchase as well as the number of years lived with a video set are important factors in the (trans)formation of their attitudes. This is in spite of the fact that the respondents' age was not correlated with their attitudinal scores. But both of the invented variables can not be used simultaneously because of a strong interrelationship between them. Having to make a choice, it has been found that the number of years lived with a video set is a better variable for its higher explanatory potential than the variable age at the time of first VCR purchase. Also, it has been discovered that girls compared to

boys and lower classes (particularly girls) more than the higher classes are likely to express more traditional attitudes.

Cultivation by Viewed and Preferred VCR Content

This section deals with the impact of various types and genres of viewed and preferred VCR content. It was initially assumed that various types of VCR content, film genres, as well as countries and languages of production are able to affect the respondents' attitudinal scores in different ways. Based on this assumption five questions were inserted in the questionnaires. As to the most frequently viewed content types, the respondents were requested to report the frequency of their use of VCR content types on a 5-point Likert scale. The provided list consisted of 16 program types, combination of content types and production countries (plus two categories 'other' which are not analysed): documentaries; Iranian, Chinese and Japanese, Turkish, Indian, American, and European feature films; educational; Iranian, Western, Turkish, and Indian music shows; professional; light entertainment; family recordings; and children's programmes. Obviously, this list combination is by no means an exhaustive one as it only drew from available information, the most favourite content types. In addition, on the preferred content types, the respondents were required to mark up to three categories of their favourite content types, film genres, countries of origin and languages of production. They were asked to use numbers 1 for their most favourite to 3 for their least favourite categories.

Here the findings of these questions are presented. For the analysis, each category of favourite content types, film genres, countries of origin and languages of production are transformed into a single variable which can have four values -0 if not preferred at all and 1 to 3 if the category has been chosen as the third, second or first most favoured content type. Then the relationship between each of the five groups of ordinal variables (frequency of viewed types and four groups of content preferences) with the attitudinal scores are calculated using Kendall's *tau-b* (τ) and Spearman's *rho* (ρ) rank correlations. Also, separate multiple regression analyses are performed to determine the explanatory potential of each of the viewed and preferred content types as well as film genres, countries of origin and languages of production. Note that the

coefficients and probability of Spearman's *rho* correlations are slightly higher than those of Kendall's *tau-b* and, therefore, the more strict statistics are used as the basis of analysis. Also, note that throughout this section, the coefficients of correlations are based on Kendall's *tau-b* (τ) and those of multiple regression are beta coefficients (β).

Comparing the results of bivariate correlations with those of multiple regressions can reveal the strength as well as the degree of independence of any given category. This is because a correlation coefficient shows an absolute relationship while multiple regression eliminates the degree of interference between various content types and so a regression coefficient shows a relative relationship. Therefore, if the significance or direction of the coefficient of a category in the regression differs from that of bivariate correlation, this can be attributed to the effect of other content types entered in the regression equation. Any given category may, or may not, appear to have a significant positive or negative correlation with attitude. But, it is necessary to regard such a relationship valid if it is not affected by other content preferences; i.e., popularity or unpopularity of other content types.

A word of caution is relevant on the causal interpretation of the results in this section. As it has been discussed already (see chapter 7), one-shot surveys can not establish time-order, a criterion necessary for establishing causal relationship. It was also noted that this problem can be 'solved' using additional causal assumptions, provided that the existing knowledge does not falsify the assumed relations. This condition can not be fulfilled in this section. It is assumed that different content types may contribute to the (trans)formation of attitudes and that the subsequent correlation is not spurious, that is, it is not caused by another variable. But, it is also obvious that the respondents' attitudinal stand, by itself, is a major factor in determining their content preferences. Therefore, as it was suggested in the case of viewing intensity, it seems that the relationship between attitude and various content types is reciprocal causality. Regarding the lack of a real time-ordered sequence, a reciprocal causality implies that no claim can be made as to the main source of 'change'.¹⁴⁴ In other words, it cannot be determined which of these variables was the primary cause or the primary effect during the long period of time,

¹⁴⁴ It must, however, be noted that the problem of bicausality can, though with an immense difficulty, be approached by using statistical facilities such as 'block recursive' (see, e.g., Birnbaum, 1981) and 'simultaneous equations' (see, e.g., Blalock, 1971) methods. These techniques are not employed in this research due to their difficulty and limitation of time.

although clearly a (bi)causal interrelationship exists between the two variables. Therefore, this research can not claim that viewing, for example, American programmes absolutely and invariably has caused an increase in non-traditional attitudes since it is clear that the content initially has been chosen by those with a more non-traditional attitude.

Nevertheless, this is a problem of theoretical interpretation. Here, cognisant to the problem of interpreting bicausal relationships and not being able to use proper correctional methods, I have no choice but to compromise with the limitations of this survey as well as the shortcoming of the limited statistical methods employed herein. Therefore, although questionable, I use rather a causal language in discussing the relationship between the attitudinal scores and the content preferences. But, I do not attempt to claim 'which came first' and also I invite the reader to bear in mind that the proven relationships are not One-Way and there exists a very strong reason to believe that they have been reciprocal within a long span of time. The long period of causal interdependence between attitudes and content preferences of the sample, and in this matter any audience member, may in fact well precede the date of VCRs' introduction in their homes or even innovation of the VCR technology.

Cultivation by VCRs and Viewed Content Types

Results of the rank correlations show that the attitudinal scores of the sample are significantly ($p \leq .05$) correlated with 8 content types. Accordingly, a more frequent use of documentaries (-.0923), Chinese and Japanese feature films¹⁴⁵ (-.0914), educational (-.1930) as well as children's programmes (-.1612) is negatively correlated with attitudes. This means that those with a more non-traditional attitudes tend to view these types less frequently and vice versa. On the other hand, Turkish and American feature films (.1234 and .1930, respectively) as well as Iranian and Western music shows (.1113 and .1995, respectively) are viewed more frequently by those who have a more non-traditional attitude. Other content types are not correlated with attitudes and, therefore, are viewed almost equally by all respondents. These categories include Iranian, European and Hindi

¹⁴⁵ This category, in fact, includes all South-East Asian productions, since in Iran all (generally martial arts) movies produced in countries such as China, Japan, Hong Kong and South Korea are known as Chinese or Japanese.

movies; Turkish and Hindi music shows; professional; light entertainment; and family recordings -all with correlations less than ± 0.07 .

Furthermore, the majority of bivariate correlations between the 16 content types are significant (128 out of total 136 possible correlations) and are positive. This finding implies that those respondents with a higher frequency of viewing VCR content tend to view all content types. This is despite the fact that viewing particular types is positively or negatively related to the traditional or non-traditional attitudes of the respondents. In other words, although those respondents with a more non-traditional attitude tend to watch some content types more frequently they also watch other types more often as well. (This result will be discussed later when the preferred content types is analysed.)

The multiple regression analysis reveals interesting results. The 16 content types are able to explain 26.5% of attitudinal variations ($R = .5155$; $R^2 = .2657$; $F = 5.903$; $F \text{ Sig.} < .001$), although it should not be interpreted as an unequivocal causal relationship. According to the results, educational cassettes ($-.2122$; $p < .001$), children's programmes ($-.2020$; $p < .01$) and Chinese and Japanese movies ($-.2122$; $p < .05$), respectively, are more likely to increase traditionalism among the sample, although these programmes are primarily preferred more by the same respondents -those with a more traditional attitudes. On the other hand, American and European feature films (respectively, $.1680$ and $.1327$; both at $p < .05$) as well as Western and Hindi music shows (respectively, $.1713$ and $.1952$; both at $p < .01$) are likely to increase more non-traditional attitudes.

Comparing the results of bivariate correlations with those of multiple regression can raise some interesting, though preliminary, results. According to this, the 16 content types can be classified into the following groups: (A) According to both the statistical tests, Iranian and Hindi movies, Turkish music shows, professional and entertaining programmes as well as family recordings are not correlated with attitudes. This means that these content types are either only preferred by a small proportion of the sample or, if popular, they are relatively equally viewed by respondents with various attitudinal scores. (B) Chinese and Japanese movies as well as educational and children's programmes are negatively and American and Western music shows positively correlated with the attitude and their coefficients have remained significant in the multiple regression. This shows that covariations between these content types and attitude is very

strong and they are not affected by (un)popularity of other content types. (C) Hindi music shows and European movies are not correlated with attitudes ($p>.05$) but their regression coefficients are significant. One may claim this implies that if these types are selected in conjunction with some other types, they can explain some of the attitudinal variations while their preference, by itself, does not show such a relationship. (D) Documentaries, Turkish movies and Iranian music shows that are correlated significantly with the attitudinal scores do not seem to have significant regression coefficients.¹⁴⁶ This also may imply that, when they are considered in conjunction with other types, these contents can not be regarded as valid regressors for the attitudinal variations.

However, the results of viewed content types must be regarded as preliminary and accomplished by analysis of content preferences. This is because the former is based on a combined list of content types and production countries and also because their variances (1 to 5) reflect the respondents' reported viewing frequencies which do not necessarily correspond to their preferences. In order to solve these problems, the following results are presented on four groups of content preferences.

Cultivation by VCRs and Preferred Content Types

The respondents have reported up to three of their preferred content types from a list which consisted of 8 categories: documentaries; music shows; feature films; educational, professional, and children's programmes; light entertainment; and family recordings.¹⁴⁷ According to the results of bivariate correlations, feature films, light entertainment and family recordings are not correlated with the attitudinal scores of the sample. From the rest of the categories, only preference of music shows appears to be positively correlated with attitudes (.1961; $p<.001$). While, documentaries (.0939; $p<.05$), as well as educational, professional and children's programmes are negatively correlated with attitudes (respectively, -.2542; $p<.001$, -.0995; $p<.05$, and -.1166; $p<.05$).

¹⁴⁶ In fact, 'Turkish movies' has a marginally significant coefficient .1341; $p=.0613$.

¹⁴⁷ For frequencies of the 8 content types (as well as 'others' and 'un-known' categories) consult table 8-4 in chapter 8.

According to the multiple regression, the 8 content types have less explanatory potential than the previous 16 categories ($R=.4250$; $R^2=.1806$; $F=5.903$; $F \text{ Sig. } <.001$). Most content types have negative coefficients. These are educational content ($-.2688$; $p<.001$), family recordings ($-.1931$; $p<.001$), children's programmes ($-.1612$; $p<.01$), documentaries ($-.1403$; $p<.05$) and professional programmes ($-.1176$; $p<.05$) respectively. This means that these types can explain attitudinal variations in reverse. But, somehow surprisingly, the coefficients of musical shows, feature films, and light entertainment are not valid. However, one may interpret the insignificance of the coefficients as implying that the respondents have chosen these categories equally and regardless of their attitudes. This result may seem contradictory to the results of viewed content types. It must be noted that the previous analysis was based on 6 categories of films as well as 4 categories of musical shows. Considering these results two conclusions can be suggested: a) that the respondents almost regardless of their attitudes prefer movies, music shows and light entertainment and b) that the respondents prefer some particular types of movies and music shows on the basis of their attitudes. In other words, although these types are equally popular among all respondents, some particular types of movies and music shows are preferred more by those who have a more non-traditional attitude.

By comparing the results of correlations and multiple regression, the 8 content types can be classified into four groups: A) According to the correlation and regression coefficients, the respondents' preferences of feature films and light entertainment have no relations with their attitudes. These categories, therefore, are equally popular among all groups of respondents. B) Documentaries as well as educational, professional, and children's programmes are negatively correlated with the respondents' attitudinal scores and this is not affected by the (un)popularity of other types. C) The popularity of family recordings is not separately correlated with attitudes but, in conjunction with other types, it is transformed into a negative regressor of attitudes. D) Unlike family recordings, music shows' preference is positively correlated with attitudes but, as an effect of interference between all preferences, this relationship has become insignificant in multiple regression analysis.

Furthermore, comparing the results of the viewed and preferred content types reveals an interesting point. While the majority of bivariate correlations between 16

viewed content types were positively significant, out of a total 32 bivariate correlations between the 8 categories only 14 are valid (3 positively and 11 negatively). Thus, the conclusion that the majority of the respondents tend to view all content types almost equally must be drawn with caution. In fact, one may argue that these situations rather reflect a methodological problem -type of question. The analysis of viewed content types is based on a question for which the respondents' were asked to report how often they viewed each of the 16 types on a 5-point Likert scale. But, on the content preferences, the respondents had to choose only a maximum of three types. Therefore, the relationship between the popularity of all content types, at least partially, reflects the number of choices which the respondents were able to make.

Considering the popularity of feature films among a vast majority of the respondents, the impact of various movie genres as well as countries and languages of production is discussed below.

Cultivation by VCRs and Preferred Film Genres

Out of a list of 12 movie genres, the respondents have chosen up to three most favourite categories (see table 9.1). The results of rank correlations show that crime and police dramas, comedies, as well as tragic, historic and social/political stories are not correlated with the respondents' attitudes. Martial arts, war stories, science-fiction and family dramas respectively have negative correlations with attitudinal scores. On the other hand, romantic stories, westerns and, surprisingly, horror movies are positively correlated with attitudes.

The multiple regression analysis proves to be successful ($R=.5044$; $R^2=.2544$; $F=7.704$; $F \text{ Sig. } <.001$), although this should not be regarded as an undisputed causal relationship. Horror, western, tragic, historic, and social/political genres are not significant regressors of attitudes. Respectively, martial arts, family dramas, crime and police stories, war movies, and comedies are negatively associated with attitudes. On the other hand, only love stories and westerns are positive regressors of the attitudinal variations. Also, comparing the results of correlation and regression reveals the following points. The insignificant correlations of tragic, historic, and social/political movies as well as the positive or negative correlations of science-fiction, love stories, family dramas,

martial arts and war movies are not changed. This implies that these categories have strong and independent relationships with the respondents' attitudinal stands. But, the coefficients of horror movies, westerns, crime and police dramas, and comedies are affected by the respondents' choices of other content types.

Cultivation by VCRs and Country origins of Preferred Films

According to the bivariate correlations (see table 9-4), of the 8 categories of countries, Indian productions are not significantly correlated with the respondents' attitudes. But, respectively, Chinese & Japanese, Iranian, and Russian & Eastern European productions have negative relationships while American, Western European, And Turkish productions show positive correlations. Clearly, American feature films (.2202; $p < .001$) have the strongest positive correlation while Chinese & Japanese feature films (-.2240; $p < .001$) have equal but negative relationships with a more non-traditional attitude.

Multiple regression analysis reveals a relatively successful result ($R = .4562$; $R^2 = .2081$; $F = 9.036$; $F \text{ Sig.} < .001$). However, the coefficients of the categories are changed in the regression analysis due to the existing interference between the categories. According to the final output of regression test, Iranian and Western European films are added to the Indian productions as insignificant regressors of attitudes. Nevertheless, the negative relationships of Chinese & Japanese and Russian & Eastern European as well as the positive coefficients of American and Turkish feature films have remained intact, showing their strong and yet independent popularity among the sample.

Table 9.4- Summary of Respondents' Preferences of Film Genres, Languages & Countries of Production and Rank Correlation and Regression Coefficients with Attitude

Genres	Preferences			Rank Correlations		Regression	
	1st	2nd	3rd	(τ)	p	(β)	p
<u>Genres:</u>							
Science-fiction	34	17	17	-.1348	.01	-.1683	.01
Horror	38	39	31	.0972	.05	-.0492	n.s.
Crime & police	54	62	36	-.0382	n.s.	-.1748	.01
Romance (love)	58	44	39	.2192	.001	.1598	.01
Family dramas	32	28	19	-.0994	.05	-.1958	.01
Western	15	19	34	.1069	.05	.1023	n.s.
Martial arts	18	16	20	-.1959	.001	-.2738	.001
War story	2	12	11	-.1882	.001	-.1628	.01
Comedy	6	13	25	-.0873	n.s.	-.1550	.01
Tragic	1	2	8	.0059	n.s.	-.0211	n.s.
Historic	4	6	7	-.0010	n.s.	-.0914	n.s.
Social/political	1	1	8	-.0558	n.s.	.0017	n.s.
<u>Countries:</u>							
Iran	121	40	30	-.1740	.001	-.1005	n.s.
India	32	57	33	-.0860	n.s.	-.0106	n.s.
Russia & Eastern Europe	3	3	9	-.1465	.01	-.1362	.05
USA	81	64	34	.2202	.001	.2399	.001
Western Europe	10	52	37	.1577	.001	.0393	n.s.
China & Japan	12	21	29	-.2240	.001	-.2272	.001
Turkey	11	14	37	.1150	.05	.1211	.05
'Other'	5	7	12	.1013	.05	.1196	.05
<u>Languages:</u>							
Persian (Farsi)	228	23	5	-.1952	.001	-.1876	.01
Russian	0	2	1	-.0959	.05	-.0979	n.s.
Chinese	1	3	2	-.0221	n.s.	.0263	n.s.
English	34	127	29	.1376	.01	.1058	n.s.
Hindi	5	28	41	-.0983	.05	-.1040	n.s.
Arabic	1	4	27	-.2186	.001	-.2485	.001
French	1	1	13	.1185	.05	.0875	n.s.
German	0	10	18	.1182	.05	.0703	n.s.
Turkish	0	38	44	-.0796	n.s.	-.0582	n.s.
Japanese	1	4	6	-.0499	n.s.	-.0077	n.s.
'Other'	1	3	14	.0893	n.s.	.0326	n.s.

Cultivation by VCRs and Preferred Film Languages

On the relationship of various languages with attitudes (see table 9-4), the respondents chose up to three languages out of a list of 10 plus an 'others' category. Bivariate correlations show that Turkish, Chinese, and Japanese languages are not correlated with attitudes while Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and Russian languages respectively have negative relations. On the other hand, English, French, and German languages have positive correlations with attitudes.

Multiple regression analysis shows that only Persian and Arabic languages have significantly negative relationships with attitudes, although the total validity of regression equation seems satisfactory ($R=.4310$; $R^2=.1858$; $F=5.642$; $F \text{ Sig. } <.001$). This can be attributed to the fact that Persian language has been the respondents' almost unrivalled preferred language for VCR content (228 as first, 23 as second and only 5 as third choice). This can be confirmed by eliminating the Persian and Arabic categories from the regression equation. The result of such modification can be theoretically interpreted as implying that, given the unavailability of enough Persian movies on video cassettes, which languages would be preferred by the sample. The result of this regression shows that, in the absence of Persian movies (whether original or dubbed), English, French and German languages are more likely to be chosen by those who hold more non-traditional attitudes (with coefficients of, respectively, .1352, .1316, and .1240; all at $p<.05$).

Conclusion: In this section the impact of various types of viewed and preferred VCR content as well as film genres, languages and countries of production was discussed. Although it was also suggested that the established relationships are not to be considered as absolute causal. This was because of the fact that the respondents' attitudes and choice of content have a reciprocal causal interrelationship. Nevertheless, on the bases of calculated R^2 of several multiple regression analyses, it has been found that various content categories are among factors that can explain a relatively noticeable amount of variation in attitude (R^2 between .1806 and .2657).

Cultivation; Personal Activity, Parental Control & Viewing Context

In this section the implications of viewing context, parental control and personal activities for the respondents on their attitudinal scores are studied. It has been assumed that those respondents whose usage of video sets and cassettes is subjected to an intense control by their parents are less likely to express a more non-traditional attitude. Also, it has been assumed that various types of the sample's viewing context and their activities before, during and after exposure may affect (increase or decrease) their attitudes.

Cultivation by VCRs and Audience Activity

The relationship between the respondents' attitudes and activities is not merely a One-Way causal. In fact, it must be considered as a reciprocal causality because the respondents' attitudinal stand is a major factor which determines the type and frequency of the audiences activities. Regarding this limitation, here the procedure of data analysis and the subsequent results are discussed (see table 9-5). Frequency of various types of the respondents' activities before, during and after exposure to the video content are studied by using an invented 'audience activity scale'. The scale includes 19 statements on the respondents' involvement with, and utilisation of, the video content. These statements asked the respondents to specify how often, for example, they arranged and decided prior to their viewing, used fast-forward button of their set through unsuitable scenes, or wished that they were living in the places and with the people shown in the video programmes. The answers are given on a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 represents "never" through 5 for "always".

Several stages of bivariate and partial correlation tests and multiple regression analysis have been used for the analysis of the collected data. As the first stage, Kendall's *tau-b* (τ) bivariate rank correlation is performed between the frequency of the respondents' activities with their attitudinal scores, viewing intensity and socio-economic status. The test shows that statements 1, 2, 11, 12 and 13 are not correlated with attitudes (and, in fact, neither with SES and viewing intensity). This means that respondents are more likely to practice these activities regardless of their attitudinal stands, SES or viewing intensity. Thus, they almost equally attempt to plan before viewing or use magazines and opinions of other people in choosing their programmes.

Also, they invariably discuss with other co-viewers about the content during and after watching the programmes or talk with other people about the programmes. Other 14 statements are negatively or positively related to the respondents attitudes.

According to the correlation test, 7 statements (3 and 14 through 19) are positively correlate with attitudes (τ between .0875 and .1776). This means that those with a more non-traditional attitude are likely to: (1) feel that there are still much more programmes that they want to watch; (2) wish to live in the places that they have seen in video programmes; (3) wish to own the facilities and gadgets that they have seen on video; (4) try to do something that they have seen in a video programme; (5) feel that the real life of people in foreign countries is like what they see in the video programmes; (6) wish to be in the place of the movie characters; and (7) think that the characters in video programmes are happier than the real people living around them. On the other hand, 7 statements (4 through 10) reveal negative correlations with the attitudinal scores (τ between -.0949 and -.2018). This implies that those with a more traditional (less non-traditional) attitude are more likely to: (1) review some parts of the video programme before viewing it with all family members; (2) rent or borrow cassettes only from those sources whom they trust to have programmes suitable for family viewing; (3) ask the lender about the suitability of the content for family viewing; (4) use fast-forward button of their set through unsuitable scenes; (5) change television channels or turn it off through unsuitable scenes; (6) interrupt programmes which do not suit their family viewing; and (7) feel ashamed while watching some scenes in the presence of their parents or other people. (For the results of correlations between activities and SES and viewing intensity see table 9-5.)

As the next step, partial correlation is performed for the significant statements. Here, the role of SES has been controlled so that the correlational relations between the respondents' various activities and attitudes are not affected by their socio-economic status. According to the results, statements 5 and 6 which were negatively as well as statement 17 which was positively correlated with attitudes have been invalidated. This implies that, disregarding the role of SES, it is very likely that respondents with differing attitudinal stands try these activities with similar frequencies. The direction of other activities' correlation coefficients with attitudes is not affected in the partial correlation. But, as the effect of SES has been controlled, the coefficients of all statements have been

slightly weakened or strengthened. For example, the correlation coefficient of statement 14 has increased to .2891 in partial correlation (from .1776 in rank correlation) while that of the statement 6 has been reduced (from -.0998 to -.0528).

Then, the 14 significant statements¹⁴⁸ are added up so that two new variables are invented: *obstructive (or obstinate) audience activity* and *receptive audience activity*. These two variables are created by adding up the frequency of activities with negative (statements 4 through 10) and positive correlations (3 and 14 through 19), respectively. The obstructive audience activity shows the intensity of particular activities of the respondents who have a more traditional attitude. These respondents, intentionally or otherwise habitually, try to minimise the possible effects of the viewed video contents on their attitudes. On the other hand, the receptive audience activity exhibits the intensity of the types of activities which the respondents with a more non-traditional attitude are likely to practise before, during or after their exposure to the video content. However, it should again be noted that the relationship between attitudes and audience activity is reciprocal. Thus, it could be argued that those respondents with an intensified receptive activity are likely to be affected by video content than those who more frequently try obstructive methods.

Finally, having used the new variables of the respondents' obstructive and receptive activities, multiple regression analysis is conducted. The analysis shows that these two variable are able to explain a significant degree of variation of attitude ($R=.4242$; $R^2=.1800$; $F=30.833$; $F \text{ Sig. } <.001$). Also, the coefficients of receptive and obstructive audience activities are .3253 and -.2926, respectively. In another regression analysis, SES, gender, viewing intensity and the number of years lived with VCR are also entered in the equation along with the two new variables. The result shows that adding these two variables remarkably improves the equation's explanatory potential (R and R^2 improve from .5479 and .2097 for the first four factors to .5468 and .2989 for the six factors; $F= 18.833$; $p<.001$). When the new variables are inserted in the regression

¹⁴⁸ It should be noted that from these 14 activities only four remain significant in a multiple regression analysis. According to the result of r -square, the 14 statements are able to explain 20.9% of variation in attitude. But, the four significant statements are able to explain 18.7% of variation (statements 4 and 7 with negative betas of -.1706 and -.2177 and statements 14 and 15 with positive betas of .1730 and .1969). Thus, regarding their high explanatory potentials, these four statements can be used in further studies confidently.

equation, gender ($\beta=.0038$) has remained insignificant and the beta coefficients of SES and viewing intensity have been reduced. The coefficients of five significant variables are as follow: SES ($\beta=.1628$); viewing intensity ($\beta=.1466$); number of years lived with VCR ($\beta=.2206$); obstructive audience activity ($\beta=-.2150$) and receptive audience activity ($\beta=.2541$) (all at $p<.001$).

Cultivation by VCRs and Parental Control

It is assumed that the attitudinal scores of the respondents are affected by the amount of parental control that they are subjected to. This implies that a higher parental control can reduce the amount of cultivation by VCR content. The result of all statistical tests confirm the minimising role of parental control. According to chi-square, there is a relationship between attitudinal score of the respondents and the amount of parental control over their use of video set and cassettes ($\chi^2=60.573$; $p<.001$).

Test of bivariate correlation between the respondents' parental control with their attitudinal scores, SES, gender, viewing intensity, number of years lived with a video set, as well as obstructive and receptive activities shows the following results. The correlation coefficient of parental control with the respondents' gender is insignificant so that boys and girls are equally likely to be controlled by their parents. Parental control is strongly and positively related to obstructive audience activity ($r=.4579$). This implies that those respondents who are subjected to a more severe parental control are also more likely to attempt obstructive activities. On the other hand, familial control is negatively correlated with attitude ($r=-.3829$), SES ($r=-.3134$), viewing intensity ($r=-.3117$), number of years lived with VCR ($r=-.2414$) and receptive audience activity ($r=-.1186$). This means that those respondents who are more frequently subjected to a strict familial control are likely to belong to the lower social classes who have owned, and have lived with, a video set for a fewer number of years. Also, these respondents are more likely to watch fewer video programmes, do not attempt activities which are considered as receptive and also are more likely to express a more traditional attitude.

Table 9.5- Summary of Respondents' Personal Activities (significance p < within parentheses)

Activity	Frequency*					Rank Correlation with**		Partial Correlation	
	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude	SES	Viewing Intensity	(SES Controlled)
<u>How often you:</u>									
1) make prior plans for viewing	47	55	49	49	25	-.0825	-.0353	.0254	-.0609
2) use magazines or opinion of other people to choose a programme	48	68	65	50	34	-.0456	-.0453	.0008	-.0551
3) feel that there are still much more programmes that you want to see	15	27	38	69	119	.0904 (.05)	.0290	.1592 (.001)	.1403 (.05)
4) view some parts of the programmes before viewing it with other family members	24	21	25	55	138	-.1688 (.001)	-.0706	-.0137	-.1886 (.01)
5) rent or borrow cassettes only from those sources whom I trust	27	16	17	54	151	-.0949 (.05)	-.0855	-.0413	.0543
6) ask the lender about the suitability of the content for family viewing	15	18	17	55	161	-.0998 (.05)	-.1011 (.05)	-.0261	-.0528
7) use fast-forward through unsuitable scenes	18	22	22	31	165	-.2018 (.001)	-.1961 (.001)	-.0995 (.05)	-.1541 (.05)
8) change television channel or switch it off through unsuitable scenes	41	34	42	35	112	-.1346 (.01)	-.1029 (.05)	-.1663 (.001)	-.1499 (.05)
9) interrupt unsuitable programmes	53	74	61	48	29	-.1151 (.01)	.0753	-.1406 (.001)	-.1474 (.05)
10) feel ashamed while watching unsuitable scenes in front of others	16	27	43	53	124	-.1580 (.001)	-.1856 (.001)	-.0080	-.1330 (.05)
11) discuss with other co-viewers while watching a program	32	54	47	71	62	-.0025	-.0173	.0731	.0548
12) discuss with other co-viewers after watching a program	35	48	58	70	57	.0310	-.0138	.0773	.076
13) discuss with other people about the programmes that I see	34	49	75	65	46	-.0206	-.0032	.0702	.0584
14) wish to live in the places that I see in video programmes	56	64	48	47	52	.1776 (.001)	-.0267	.0744	.2891 (.001)
15) wish to have the facilities and gadgets that I see on video	36	58	53	58	63	.1635 (.001)	-.0110	.1115 (.01)	.2332 (.001)
16) try to do something that I have seen on video	116	72	42	20	13	.0958 (.05)	-.0798	.1536 (.001)	.1951 (.01)
17) feel that the real life of people in foreign countries is like in video programmes	74	74	48	36	36	.0875 (.05)	-.0302	.0640	.0720
18) wish to be in the place of movie characters	71	67	60	40	31	.1221 (.01)	-.0115	.1157 (.01)	.2297 (.001)
19) think that people in video programmes are happier than myself and my family	147	56	28	26	12	.1278 (.01)	.0101	.1762 (.001)	.2391 (.001)

Key: * 1= 'never'; 2= 'rarely'; 3= 'sometimes'; 4= 'often'; 5= 'always'.

** Based on Kendall's τ -b (τ). Note that coefficients of Spearman's ρ (ρ) are higher than τ .

Several conclusions could be proposed on the bases of these results. However, these conclusions must be regarded as preliminary since the vital time-order sequence is not studied in this research and so there remains a strong possibility of bicausality between the variables. One may argue that parental control is, directly and indirectly, a more successful variable in minimising the development of more non-traditional attitude. The direct impact can be shown by comparing the bivariate correlation coefficients. The strongest negative coefficient is between parental control and attitude, although all of the negative correlations are modestly strong and despite the fact that parental control is itself a class-based phenomenon. The independent role of parental control on the transformation of attitudes separated from that of social class can be tested by partial correlation. The result shows that even when the role of social class is controlled, the negative coefficient between parental control and attitude remains strong ($r = -.3065$). Also, one may yet suggest that since parental control can substantially increase the amount of obstructive audience activity ($r = .4579$), it can indirectly hinder the transformation of attitudes through the increased obstructive personal activity.

As the final test parental control is entered in the regression equation along with the previous six variables (SES, gender, viewing intensity, number of years lived with a video set, as well as obstructive and receptive activities). The result shows that inclusion of parental control improves the explanatory potential of equation with a marginal 1.5%. The multiple R and R^2 improve from, respectively, .5468 and .2989 for the six factors to .5613 and .3151 when parental control is included. Also, the inclusion of parental control reduces the beta coefficients of all factors. The largest reduction belongs to the coefficient of obstructive audience activity (from $-.2150$ to $-.1586$) which can be attributed to the strong positive correlation between the two variables. According to the results, familial control and obstructive audience activity have almost equal negative explanatory potentials so that a unit of change in each of them explains decrease of 15% of a unit in attitudes. On the other hand, receptive audience activity shows the strongest positive beta coefficient ($\beta = .2375$) followed by number of years lived with a VCR ($\beta = .2206$), SES ($\beta = .1628$) and viewing intensity ($\beta = .1466$), respectively.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ For the purpose of prediction note that the range of variables with interval measurement level are as follow: SES (15), length of VCR ownership (20), viewing intensity (22), and attitudinal scores (47), parental control (55), receptive audience activity (28), and rejective audience activity (28). The constant of regression equation with seven factors is 30.797.

Cultivation by VCRs and Viewing Context

It was initially assumed that the place of VCR viewing and the most usual structure of co-viewers affects the respondents' attitudes. Again, it should be noted that the relationship between viewing context and attitude is very possibly reciprocal. In order to test this hypothesis 20 questions were designed. The first question is related to the most usual place in which the respondents watch video programmes (at their homes, at their friends or classmates, at their neighbours, at their relatives, and elsewhere). The second question is concerned with the most usual structure of family members as co-viewers when they are watching video programmes at their homes.

According to results, from 277 valid cases, 255 watch video most often at their own homes, 16 at their relatives' houses and only 4 at their neighbours'. The friends' or class mates' houses and elsewhere each have been chosen only by one respondent as the places where they usually watch video. The last three options are eliminated from analysis due to their rare occurrences. Bivariate correlation for the two common places shows no relationship between attitudinal scores and place of video viewing. However, other results of the bivariate correlation are as follow. Girls are more likely to watch video programmes less at their own homes ($r=-.1411$) and more at their relatives ($r=.1419$). Those with a higher familial control are likely to watch video programmes at their relatives ($r=.1864$). Also, those with a higher viewing intensity are more likely to watch video at their own homes ($r=.1333$) and not at their relatives' ($r=-.1947$).

As to the most common structure of co-viewers, these options have been chosen: all family members (200), children without parents (26), children and the mother (25), children and the father (16), and parents without children (2). Bivariate correlation shows that those with a more non-traditional attitude are likely to view video programmes only with their father and siblings without their mother ($r=.1209$). Those who more often watch video without their mother are more likely to belong to higher social classes ($r=.1164$) who have owned their sets for a longer period of time ($r=.1314$) and have less obstructive activities ($r=-.1149$). Also, the respondents who more often watch video programmes with their siblings and without their parents have higher viewing intensity ($r=.1410$) and are subjected to less strict familial control ($r=-.0943$).

The distribution of 151 valid answers to the second most often structure is as follows: all family members (22), children without parents (42), children and the mother (53), children and the father (23), and parents without children (11). Bivariate correlation confirms a positive relationship between attitudinal score and choice of second structure of co-viewers (children without parents) ($r=.1907$). In addition, girls are less likely to view video programmes with their siblings only ($r=-.3384$) while they are more likely to watch video with their mothers ($r=.3310$). No other significant correlation exists between structure of co-viewers and research variables. Finally, it seems reasonable to suggest that those with a more traditional attitude are likely to choose the following order between the five possible structures; all family members, children and the mother, children and the father, parents without children, children without parents. This suggestion is merely based on a comparison between the correlation coefficients of the most common co-viewing structures with attitudes, although it must be noted that the majority of the coefficients are not statistically significant. A regression analysis shows that 13% of variation in attitude is attributable to the two factors of viewing context ($R=.3671$; $R^2=.1348$; $F=1.969$; $F \text{ Sig. } <.05$). But, this result should be considered with absolute caution since the two factors are transformed into 15 binary variables. This may have affected the regression results by enlarging the strength of R and R^2 .

Conclusion: In this section it was discussed that the respondents' personal activities before, during and after watching video content as well as their parental control and viewing context are crucial factors in the (trans)formation of their attitudes. It was, however, suggested that these factors have reciprocal causal relations with attitudes and therefore are strongly determined by the latter. Out of a total of 19 statements, 14 activities show significant positive or negative (7 each) correlations with attitudes. Based on these statements, two new variables (obstructive and receptive audience activities) were created which proved to be successful regressors for the attitudinal scores. It was also discussed that parental control can directly and indirectly affect attitudes. The indirect impact can be attributed to the respondents' personal obstructive activities.

Chapter X

Conclusion

In the two sections of this research I discussed the socio-political and socio-cultural implications of VCRs in Iran at national/institutional and individual/familial levels. It was suggested that the VCR, as the pioneer of new information and communications technologies, has globally had far-reaching effects. The NICTs are currently ushering the world into a new era when and where information and media content gain an unprecedented prominence. The new era of information, post-industrial society is characterised by informationalisation, transnationalisation, abundance of media channels and choices, and diversification of content.

The new technologies are increasingly affecting the perceptions and behaviour of the individual. They are also transforming the structure and functions of the social institutions and organisations such as education, family, politics, and economy. However, the extent of the changes varies according to any country's pre-existing economic, cultural and political characteristics. The new technologies have given rise to, and also have magnified the scope of, various societal issues. At the international level, the issue of cultural autonomy or cultural dependence is meaningfully being revived. This has set the scene for re-invention of powerful media as well as cultural/media imperialism theories. On the other hand, the new media provide a new hope for the development of freedom and democracy at regional, national and even global levels.

The NICTs, it could be said, have provided a wider and more powerful opportunities for manipulation and control. This power may be exploited by indigenous (sub- or infra-) national groups for self-expression, self-determinism and politico-cultural autonomy. The expanded opportunity, paradoxically, may give an external force a higher possibility for manipulation, alienation and subordination of any given group. The strongest players in the international communications are those transnational media corporations which control the majority of media content production and diffusion.

These corporations, intentionally or otherwise, represent the ideological-cultural interests of their rich and developed nation-states.

The Video Cassette Recorder has a distinctive place among the NICTs. The VCR enables the user to record television programs off-air and to play pre-recorded cassettes tirelessly. It also has additional features which empower the user to skip any unwanted message while recording or re-playing (zapping and zipping). These facilities, considered in context of a vast market of available cassettes, result in: diversification of available video content, personalisation of media use, de-standardisation of the scheduled television programmes, and decentralisation of control over media content by media organisations and governments. In the 1980s, these implications resulted in the technology's high desirability and therefore in a relatively short period it became an omnipresent home commodity, penetrating more than 80-90% of TV families in a great number of countries. They penetrated all countries -poor or rich, developed or developing, liberal or conservative, and modern or traditional. VCRs' presence in many Third World media-poor and even some developed countries resulted in severe problems and reactions. The VCR in these countries appeared as a threat to the existing political and cultural (linguistic, moral, and religious) orders/interests.

As a new mass communications medium, the VCR is potentially capable of affecting social structures and the conditions of social life. In this context, the VCR's potential to affect the process of (trans)formation of the individual's societal identities and, through this, socio-political structures has attracted great attention. In many countries free circulation of restricted ideo-political content threatened the control of the relevant states over their nations' video consumption. The new content -made available through VCRs which was otherwise limited if known at all- shifted the public's complex pyramid of identities. This was achieved, in some countries, by reviving ethno-linguistic affiliations of minorities. In other countries the flow of politically dissenting and oppositional messages threatened some states' ideological domination. The global domination of VCR market by products of Western and in particular American corporations has also met resistance in some other countries. In addition, the life-styles and identities of other social groups -such as religious minorities, women, and children and adolescents- have in one way or another been affected by the VCR boom.

This outcome resulted in resistance against video sets and cassettes in some countries for political and or cultural reasons. A few developed and many developing countries adopted restrictive or prohibition policies in order to limit the scope of the 'detrimental' impact of video sets and (some kinds of) cassettes. In this regard, many Muslim countries -including the revolutionary Iran- appear to have been among the most decisive opponents of the VCR's high home penetration.

In this research I have shown how the ideological, political, and economic factors shaped the structure of the Iranian state. I have also shown how the state's general cultural/media policies affected the VCRs' popular uses, functions and definitions. I indicated that VCR policies of the state were determined by the larger societal/historical context within which the state itself was shaped and within which the state assessed and reacted to the VCR.

The VCR experienced a unique presence in Iran. Its humble presence as an organisational instrument and a luxury, made it insignificant during the Pahlavi era. But, when in the late 1970s its price fell globally and it was becoming a global home appliance, Iran was experiencing a popular uprising against the existing political, economic, and moral order. The Revolution, uniting all socio-economic classes, was a popular and populist upheaval in 'negativism'. The new revolutionary regime from the outset was motivated by, and pursued, a moralistic, religious, and re-traditionalist ideology. Thus, it faced various internal rivalries, external politico-economic pressures as well as a full scale military threat. Based on their religious and political aspirations which were affected by the country's historical experiences, the revolutionary power elite rigorously developed a belief and pursued a return to an authentic, pure, and religiously-defined self. Consequently, the authorities heralded a zealous distrust of the West and whatever could be attributed to its imperialistic tendencies. This included many aspects of the dominant interpretations of development and modernisation. In the years that followed, strategic policies of Islamicisation and de-Westoxification encompassed all societal spheres. These policies were based on, and used the discursive language of revolutionary, Shi'a Islamic, nativist, and Third Worldist ideologies.

The Islamicisation and de-Westoxification policies of the Islamic Republic in the cultural/media sphere was based on the same religiously-worded historical understanding.

They, to a great extent rightfully, believed that mass media in Iran were developed by the autocratic shahs as part and parcel of their political consolidation plans and therefore, categorically, were used to tighten the country's political and economic dependence on the West and to alienate the nation culturally. The revolutionary elite and many intellectuals alike believed that the mass media and particularly the state broadcasting monopoly (NIRT) under the Pahlavis widened the material, spiritual and cultural gaps between the ruling elites and its 'modern' upper class advocates with the 'traditional' middle and lower classes. Briefly speaking, it was claimed that, modernisation destroyed Iran's political and cultural independent 'old (i.e., traditional) order' which was based on a 'pre-modern' morality and a sense of justice and replaced it with a 'modern (dis)order'. Accordingly, dignity, self-respect, and identity of the majority of the population was injured by the subsequent alienation and 'Westoxification.' Consequently, one of the most crucial (cl)aims of the Revolution of 1979 was to re-capture and control the cultural domain and mass communications media, to re-store traditional value systems, and to re-introduce the pure, authentic, and popular Shi'a culture.

After its establishment in 1979, the Islamic Republic tried to use mass media to disseminate Islamic ideology and to confront the channels of Westernisation. The regime attempted to establish a 'just' and 'moral' society by developing an Islamic educational system, Islamic public sphere, and Islamic mass media. As far as the media are concerned, it limited the share of foreign content and set control mechanisms on domestic production. It also banned production, import and/or dissemination of all messages that advocated alcohol, gambling, free sexual relations, un-religious interaction between male and female, cultural 'liberalism,' anti-Islamic propaganda and alike.

However, during the 1980s the production of domestic media content with acceptable Islamic standards remained problematic and thus embryonic. As a result of these difficulties and ambiguities, mass media were dominated by traditionalist, moralising, didactic, educational, propagandistic, and informative characteristics. Thus, the two cultural principles of Islamicisation and confrontation with the un-Islamic brought about a cultural/media environment which lacked dynamism, plurality and freedom and therefore lagged behind their expected aims. The strict Islamicisation-politicisation of formal culture in the absence of formal political activity met resistance and resulted in the politicisation of informal cultural spaces. Hence, there developed a

dissatisfaction with, and resistance toward, the formal culture among some sectors of the population. These sectors included primarily the modern middle and upper social classes who were 'internationalised' and had developed cosmopolitan life-styles and tastes under the previous regime.

The dissatisfied sectors of the public gradually turned to the VCR for content not provided by the national media. The demands of these expanding sectors nourished a 'cultural black market' which provided the alternative media content of forbidden domestic or foreign print, audio, and video material. The increasing import of VCRs immediately after the February 1979 Revolution attracted the government's attention. This in July 1980 resulted in prohibition of VCR imports for financial reasons. This policy later proved to be a lasting one because of the outbreak of the war with Iraq in September that year. Finally in May 1983 activities of all video clubs were banned. This ambiguous policy was only later and gradually translated into a total prohibition of video sets and illegal video cassettes. The policy was adopted in order to confront the powerful and growing VCR organisation, to battle the *Taghuti* culture of the globalised and rich upper class, to re-attract the audiences to the national broadcast and cinema, and to prevent the VCR being used by the political opposition. In the following years the VCR's possible impact in undermining the popular war campaign was added to the list of reasons which made it undesirable by the state.

During the 1980s, a very intense 'anti-VCR discourse' was developed in Iran by state organisations, the mass media and some sectors of the public. According to this discourse, VCR was the central factor of the broad Western (American) conspiracy against the sacred religious political and cultural rhetoric and plans of the Islamic Republic. VCR was the technology that facilitated, accompanied, accomplished, and aggravated all satanic, impure, and animalistic desires and the relevant criminal acts. According to this discourse, VCR, though itself a neutral technology, had profound and far-reaching cultural and political implications in Iran. It was produced by the international enemies to destroy Iran's divine plans to gain cultural and political independence. Such an independence would result in a religious, moral, and sacred order in the society.

The 1983 prohibition policy destroyed Iran's embryonic video industry and organisation, brought to an end publication and open discussion on relevant industrial and cultural subjects, and criminalised video sets and the majority of available video cassettes. However, it failed to create the expected 'cultural quarantine' and instead helped the development of a strong smuggling business. The numerous underground networks smuggled in hundreds of thousands of video sets and tens of thousands of new program titles. Meanwhile, small suppliers and customers adopted new strategies to maintain their activity. Among these techniques were: door-to-door (or shop-to-shop) distribution by *Video-Men*; expansion of small-scale 'apartment video-clubs' in residential neighbourhoods; adoption of a system of several-nightly or weekly cassette rental; sharing of the rented, borrowed, or purchased tapes with relatives, neighbours, colleagues and friends; introduction of cassette suppliers and customers through trusted intermediaries; and duplication of cassettes using two connected VCR sets. In addition, the 1983 prohibition policy deprived the society of any possible control mechanisms on circulating content and this multiplied the VCRs' de-centralising feature. In this context, however, the general audience was mobilised in order to overcome the perceived dangers of viewing morally and culturally offensive material. Families adopted several strategies to safeguard their children and youngsters from the negative effects of pornographic, violent, and 'delinquent' material.

The VCR's underground life in Iran lasted for a decade and was affected only after profound political and policy changes. The acceptance of a cease-fire in the war with Iraq and changes of higher power figures in the period between June 1988 and July 1989 paved the way for changes toward reformist and developmental policies. The subsequent changes occurred mainly in domestic politics, economic and social policies and foreign policies. In this period, also, cultural and media policies of 1982-88 era were critically evaluated and new initiatives were gradually introduced. But, again cultural policies remained unclear and controversial, made more complicated with a chronic factionalism of the power elite. In the years which followed the 1988-89 reforms, Iranian cinema and press witnessed remarkable quantitative and qualitative developments. But, until 1994 radio and television, under the control of the state monopoly (VVIR), lagged behind and did not show significant changes.

Open discussion on VCR-related issues (such as demand for legalisation of video-club activities) started from early 1990 between various state organisations and political figures. This debate was strengthened by numerous independent and affiliated print media. These debates were gradually intensified during 1991 and 1992. Finally, in 1993 VCR was legalised and activities of legal video-clubs were resumed. This policy change was made possible by new shifts in the structure of the Majlis as well as the MCIG. Legalisation of VCR was also affected by the development of discussions on the 'Western cultural onslaught' and future development of direct broadcast by satellites.

Video activities were legalised during 1993-94 under the centralised control of the Institute of Visual Media (IVM). Since then, the IVM has tried to coordinate all businesses related to the production, duplication, and distribution of video programmes. For the distribution of 'permitted' video programmes, the IVM has licensed several thousand rentals called Shops for Distribution of Cultural Products (SDCPs). The IVM and SDCCPs face a difficult task of re-gaining audiences from the underground market and have, therefore, faced enormous difficulties.

Presently, it seems premature to evaluate the impact of the legalisation policy and the establishment of the centralised and strictly controlled video organisation in Iran (including the IVM and thousands of SDCCPs). However, there is enough evidence to suggest that the criteria for the selection of programmes are similar to those of national cinema and television. This is contrary to the fact that almost 2/3 of the population (VCR owners and non-owners) consider the VCRs proper entertainment medium and that they prefer to watch programmes not provided by the national media. The legalisation policy has not resulted in the demanded 'diversification' of content and, hence, it has not so far altered the popularity of the underground market.

As conclusion on the VCR-related policies of the Islamic Republic, I would like to add some remarks. Media policy-making is a complicated issue. This is because policy-makers function ('perceive, reason, and decide') within the complex social, cultural, economic and ideological context of their societies. This, inevitably, entangles the policy-making within a historical and geographical span. Consequently, media policy research, specially if it attempts to evaluate any specific policy, has to consider an array of issues not only from the researcher's point of view but also through the eyes of the policy-

makers. A fair combination of subjective and objective perspectives in policy research is a daunting task since it makes a final evaluation difficult. However, despite these difficulties, I would like to say that restrictive or even prohibition policies on the VCR in Iran, and in this sense in any country (including the Third World) against any new technology, can not in itself be regarded as 'inappropriate'. Such a policy, one may argue, is even necessary for preservation of national interests and identities as long as international imbalances exist in the production and dissemination of media content. In addition, such policies to a limited extent can decrease the new technology's penetration rate which has financial implications for the preservation of national media production. Also, such a policy is capable of creating an environment suitable for the development of 'national' industry for the production of hardware (such as video sets and satellite receivers).

However, what seems to be crucial for all countries is understanding all of the repercussion of the development of the new communications technologies -i.e., globalisation of cultural industries and media content, technologies and consumption. Globalisation implies that restrictive policies are 'useful' as far as they are adopted as temporary and, in fact, 'delaying' tactics. The age of globalisation requires the local identities to 'obtain' their own voices if they are not to be relinquished. This means that qualitative and quantitative development of 'national' culture and media must be a higher priority of all countries -including the Islamic Republic- and that this can be achieved in an environment of dynamism, dialogue, freedom, and tolerance. Globalisation of media, in fact, paradoxically imposes a *re*-localisation: a process toward a critically evaluated, refined and re-defined self. In brief, what seems to be important in the age of globalisation of media for all local identities is how and in which direction to develop 'us' and 'ours' if there is a wish not to be 'theirs'. In the due process, delaying and temporary policies may help a country to become 'prepared' for the full-fledged 'exchange' of ideas in an 'equal' intercultural market.

The second part of this research had questioned issues such as: the VCR's class-based diffusion in Iran; its use patterns by the audiences; its impact on the audiences' uses of national media; the impact of length of VCR ownership; the role of the video sets and cassettes in cultivation of (selected non-traditional) attitudes; cultivation relativity across various age and gender groups and classes; and the role of preferred content types,

audience activities as well as parental control methods on the amount of cultivation. The final results of these questions are discussed here.

According to the findings, 52.2% of high school students own a video set. It was confirmed that the VCR's diffusion in Iran started from the higher classes and that even at the time of the fieldwork (in December 1994-March 1995) VCRs' penetration was not equal among all classes. In addition, there seems to exist an almost complete positive and linear interrelationship between SES and length of ownership. But, it should be noted that the majority of those who had obtained their VCRs prior to 1980 are classified here as upper-middle class families whose fathers have high education and work as professional civil servants. (For some remarks on the relationship between the VCR, social class and culture see below.)

The research was unable to determine the respondents' ritualistic and instrumental uses of the VCR conclusively. According to the data, the majority of the sample do not own substantial numbers of cassettes (on average 16.6 cassettes) or a noticeable amount of family films (on average 1.9 cassettes per household). They also very rarely attempted to record television offerings (on average 1.8 times per annum). This implies that a vast majority of the sample use their video sets for viewing pre-recorded material which are generally entertainment programmes. The sample is divided into three almost equal groups of light, moderate, and heavy users of their video sets. This implies that the number of ritualistic VCR users (i.e., the heavy viewers) mounts to at least one-quarter of VCR users. Although, it is obvious that the moderate and even the light viewers may also use their VCRs for viewing merely entertaining content. This is also confirmed by analysing the respondents' content preferences. The two most popular content types are entertainment (film and music shows) followed after a gap by two informative types (educational and documentary). The analysis of content preference has established that almost three-quarters of the sample's VCR viewing involves entertainment programmes. Thus, it was cautiously concluded that between 1/3 and 3/4 of the sample are ritualistic users of their video sets. This shows that a big proportion of the VCR users are vulnerable to cultivation impact of the dominant VCR content.

In the research the possible impact of the VCR on the respondents' uses of the national mass media was studied. This was an important hypothesis since one of the main

reasons of the VCRs' prohibition in Iran for almost a decade was said to have been their certain impact on the national cinema and broadcast media. The relevant findings here are quite surprising. The VCR owners tend to buy and read a greater number of newspapers and magazines compared to the non-owners. In addition, it was also discovered that the amount of VCR viewing does not affect newspaper purchase and readership. In fact, surprisingly, a higher intensity of VCR use results in a higher rate of magazine readership. It has been also found that VCR owners (regardless of their socio-economic status) tend to listen to radio programmes less frequently while they go to cinema more than the non-owners. Also, surprisingly again, it was found that heavier VCR users go to movies more than the moderate and light users. Furthermore, it has been found that VCR ownership and viewing intensity do not affect the respondents' use of national television channels during weekdays or weekends. Regarding these results, it is possible to suggest, contrary to the dominant arguments, that video sets and cassettes have not contributed to an increase of dislike for reading or national broadcast and cinema in the society.

These results, it may be argued, point to a preliminary finding that VCR owners and specially those with a higher VCR viewing intensity may gradually become 'professional' communications-seekers as readers, and viewers, although they may not prefer to listen to radio much. Apparently, the time spent for viewing VCR content does not reduce the amount of time spent watching national television channels or reading newspapers and magazines. This implies that the (higher) VCR users tend to add the VCR to the existing communications channels and so they participate more as audiences of the national media systems than the non-owners. Such a result, if proved by further studies, can erase the fear that the VCR 'alienates' its audiences from the larger society and its communications channels. Also, if confirmed by much needed further research, the underlying trend may be interpreted as implying that acquiring VCR results in a change of life-style. By this I mean ownership of a VCR and viewing a higher amount of video content increase the individual's 'reasons and motivations' for a higher 'amount' of media consumption, even though this by no means should be related to the content preferences of the audiences. Also it can be suggested that VCR ownership and viewing intensity have in fact facilitated the users' increased involvement in their society at least through the communication channels. This can also be interpreted as 'localising' impact

of globalised media consumption; a critical search by the individual for a better socio-political and cultural identity. Whether the increased media consumption will result in any change of the individual's perception and identity and whether such a shift will have any significant implications for the individual's relations/interactions with the larger society/state has to be studied more exclusively. Once again I remind that this interpretation is provided regardless of the impact of VCR ownership and viewing intensity on the content preferences of the audiences.

On the impact of length of VCR ownership it was discovered that the length of ownership is not correlated with viewing intensity. In other words, viewers with high, moderate, or light amount of VCR use can be found almost equally among groups with various length of VCR ownership. On the other hand, it was discovered that the earlier VCR buyers use fewer control methods less frequently than later VCR owners. However, this does not mean that the amount of parental control among newer owners will decrease in time since parental control is a highly class-based phenomenon and the earlier VCR buyers -who have higher socio-economic status- tend to impose lesser control on their adolescents' VCR uses. Also, it was found that light viewers are more likely to appear in the families with a higher level of parental control. Regarding the fact that viewing intensity is not affected by the length of ownership and SES, it could be concluded that higher control results in less intensive viewing. According to the data, it also seems reasonable to suggest that a higher control rate, including the less gentle and more direct methods, is less likely to create a negative reaction among the children.

These findings raise some remarks on the relationship between mass media (including the VCR), culture, and social class in Iran. It was discussed that social class was a crucial factor in the penetration of the VCR in Iran. But, this does not necessarily mean that all of the upper class families have more globalised cultural and media tastes. To give but one finding, it was observed that the VCRs' penetration even among the upper class is not 100%. This can only be attributed to the non-owner family's cultural background and not apparently to its economic ability. In fact, some findings imply that the middle classes, categorically, express more globalised attitudes than the upper class, while some sectors of the upper class show the most non-traditional attitudes. Briefly speaking, social class is not the only factor of the audience's media tastes and the VCR's adoption. Similarly, personal activity and familial control are affected by the family's

cultural background, although again the family's SES is a crucial factor here. In other words, VCR use, personal activity and familial control are influenced by the family's cultural *and* socio-economic statuses and that these two variables do not show an undisputed linear and causal relationship. It could be suggested that the degree of family members' traditionality or globalisation depends to some extent on the parents' educational status and some sectors of the (modern) middle-classes are more educated compared to the majority of the upper class. However, a better understanding of the tertiary relationship between media, culture and social class in Iran requires further detailed audience studies.

The study focused on the cultivation impact of dominant video content and the activation of audiences. In this regard, it was discovered that ownership of a video set and also consumption of (a higher amount of) video content has influenced the respondents' attitudes toward a more non-traditional (Western) stand. These factors, along with the related factors of SES and length of VCR ownership, have been crucial in inculcation of attitudes which are contrary to those disseminated through the national mass media and other socialising agents. This should not be interpreted as that the VCR owners and the heavier VCR users will necessarily behave according to their expressed attitudes. In fact, the relationship between attitude and behaviour is far from being a linear and causal one. Further analysis revealed that the amount of cultivation was not equal among and between all social groups. Here the role of social class, gender and age were discussed. It was found that the respondents' age (at the time of research) was not an important factor. But, this result changed significantly when the simple age factor was replaced with the 'age at the time of first VCR purchase' and 'the number of years lived with a video set'. It was discovered that the lower the age of a respondent at the time of VCR purchase and consequently the more the number of years spent watching video, and the more amount of content watched, the more the respondent is likely to express a non-traditional attitude.

The research discovered that gender does not appear to be an important factor in the formation of attitudes among the VCR owners. But, the girls who do not have constant access to a video set were more likely to be more traditional than non-VCR owning boys. In other words, while boys and girls who have constant access to a VCR are almost equally likely to be affected by the content, the non-VCR owning boys are

more non-traditional than their female counterparts. In general, boys most probably learn their attitudes from other socialising agents (e.g., peer groups) while girls are more affected by their families as well as number of years lived with VCR and viewing intensity. Combination of gender and social class yielded interesting results. It was discovered that boys and girls with various socio-economic backgrounds showed different degrees of vulnerability to VCR-related factors. The attitudinal stand of the upper classes were more explainable by the studied factors. Comparison between attitudinal scores of boys and girls of various social classes revealed a steady and consistent increase toward a more non-traditional attitude. The differences between attitudinal scores of boys and girls among the middle classes were narrower while the upper and lower class boys were more non-traditional than their female counterparts. In brief, it was discovered that boys and girls who are exposed to video content are almost equally more non-traditional than those boys and particularly girls who do not own a video set.

The research questioned the role of content-related factors as well as audience activity, parental control and viewing context in the amount of cultivation. It was discovered that various preferred content types, viewed content types, film genres, countries of production, and content languages have differing impact on the amount of cultivation. Also, it was discovered that some categories may become a negative or positive regressor if they are considered in conjunction with other categories. However, these results were not presented as final since a reciprocal causality was suspected between content and attitudes -due to the lack of real time-ordered sequence.

It was found that the VCR audiences in Iran are very active: They attempt various activities before, during, and after viewing a video content in order to maximise their use. It was also discovered that they are critical VCR users and therefore by adopting many obstructive methods they try to minimise the negative impact of the content. These results were based on an invented 'audience activity scale' -which facilitated invention of two new variables (obstructive and receptive audience activities). The research found that Iranian parents were also active mediators who successfully imposed various control methods on their children's VCR uses. Part of their success was obvious through a higher amount of the respondents' own obstructive activity rate.

The findings of the survey research raises some points in relation to the Cultivation theory, the notion of Audience Activity, and media effects research in general. The notion of Audience Activity was quite inspiring although new developments especially on audience activity and parental control in the Third World, in particular in the case of 'new content' seem essential. On the one hand, the main hypothesis of Cultivation theory was useful but the theory in general proved to have a limited applicability in this research. This is partially because the present research was a one-shot survey while Cultivation Analysis is designed for longitudinal panels. On the other hand, this research was concerned with the cultivation of non-conventional international media content viewed through the VCR. This meant that the theory was used as a grand underlying theory. Such a theory provides a main hypothesis which can only 'guide' a research but can not be critically evaluated or modified. In addition, some of the analytical tools of the Cultivation theory -such as mainstreaming and resonance- could not be employed in this research -at least in their original forms. The theory, for example, implies that long-term exposure to the television world results in dissemination of 'mainstream' and moderate attitudes since television tries to avoid marginal, extremist messages. The level of analysis in conventional Cultivation Analysis is national and thus the mainstream and marginal are defined in terms of the 'national' culture. But, when an international cultivation study is intended it is very likely that the mainstream (of the producer culture) may appear extremist in the consumer culture. In this context 'mainstreaming' impact of the content may be in fact interpreted as de-traditionalisation (or modernisation or even Westernisation). Use of such terminology in international cultivation studies (in particular those concerned with the VCR content) requires much consideration and modification.

Furthermore, Cultivation Analysis and in general media research must be regarded primarily as a cultural study. In such a research, the interrelationship between the media and the audience should be studied and the results should be interpreted within the characteristics of the relevant cultural (and hence political) context. Regarding this point, Cultivation Analysis without a re-definition of some of its terms can not be employed in countries where culture can not be divided easily into 'mainstream versus marginal' but into 'formal versus informal'. This distinction is essential since some significant differences between them may affect the results' interpretation. In those

countries where culture and media are pluralist, private, and diverse the mainstream can exist on the bases of the commonly held and expressed ideals of the system's various sub-cultures. But, where the culture and media are controlled and manipulated by the state the 'official mainstream' may vary from what 'officially' is considered 'unofficial and marginal' while the latter may in fact be the mainstream in the society. In brief, the mainstream culture in pluralist countries is powerful since it is present and dominant in the cultural production and media content as well as in the society, while in the non-pluralist countries an official culture dominates the media which may or may not be the mainstream culture of -at least some sectors of- the masses. Approaching media study from cultural research perspective in such a way requires a re-definition of terminology of relevant theories such as Cultivation Analysis. For example, the mainstreaming impact of foreign media should be in fact defined, at least according to the official culture, as 'marginalisation' and 'counter-mainstreaming' -i.e., a process of disseminating the marginal to a point of replacing the mainstream. Here, again it should be stressed that such (re-)definitions are inevitably entangled within the politics of the national cultural identities.

A further point on the use of Cultivation Analysis in media effects research is necessary. The Cultivation theory claims to distance itself from the conventional effects research by using correlational methods in the data analysis. This method, as the theory's critics have argued, is not enough to establish a justifiable relationship -even if it is not claimed to be causal. For example, Cultivation Analysis compares heavy and light television viewers' perceptions and attributes the difference to the role of television content. While, as it has been argued, such differences can be attributed to various intervening factors not related to the television world. Thus, cultivation is only one possible interpretation of the results. The methodological solution for this problem is using multiple regression analysis but such an attempt in fact erases the proclaimed difference of Cultivation research with conventional media effects study.

In this research, therefore, various regression methods were used to eliminate the suspected intervening variables. So that the attitudinal differences between VCR owners and non-owners as well as between heavy, moderate and light viewers could 'only' be attributed to the role of VCR content. However, such task was proven to be extremely difficult. This was due to the research being a one-shot survey and the relevant problem

of causality as well as due to the inevitable elimination of parents' questionnaires which resulted in exclusion of many suspected crucial intervening factors. The problem of causality -the main barrier of media effects research- was faced throughout the research and all the employed methods were unable to resolve it satisfactorily. Thus, some of the findings are better treated as yet preliminary, although the employed techniques improved our understanding of the impact of VCR content on the attitudes of Iranian adolescents.

Although I do not wish to sound pessimistic, I would like to conclude the findings of this research by saying that attributing particular impact to particular content viewed through a particular medium is yet a daunting task. However, I tried to show within the capacity of this research that such an aim is far from being impossible. I firmly believe that a fair and scientific understanding of media effects across cultural borders is possible if theories are used mindful of the political and cultural context of a given country, if data is gathered using longitudinal studies, if familial context is included when children's media use is intended, and if over-simplification and over-generalisation are avoided. In brief, our knowledge on media-audience relationship needs to improve to be adequate to handle the complex reality -what is really happening around the globe!

Appendices

- A: Research Questionnaire
 - English Translation
 - Persian
- B: Sampling Procedure

Appendix A:
QUESTIONNAIRE A (For Students)

Dear Student,

First of all, I'd like to thank you very much for accepting to help me in conducting this research. This questionnaire is designed as an important part of my research which is being done for a Ph.D. degree in Sociology of Mass Communications in University of Leicester, England. The aim of this research is to study uses of people, and particularly the youth, of mass communication media. My study focuses more on the uses of Video Cassette Recorders. And also, there you will find some questions on the attitudes of the youth toward cultural issues.

As you have noticed before, the procedure of your selection has been is totally random and moreover, your answers and opinions will be replaced with digits and codes for computer analysis. Therefore, since there is no need for writing your name, I'd like to assure you of your anonymity and also of the confidentiality of the results.

Dear Student,

You, who hopefully will do your own researches for higher degrees in the few coming years, certainly are aware that research in social sciences totally rely on the accuracy of the respondent's answers. Therefore, could I use the opportunity to request you to fill the questionnaire exercising absolute freedom in expressing your beliefs and opinions.

With best wishes for you and again, Thank you!

Mehdi Montazer Ghaem
Iranian candidate for Ph.D. in:
Sociology of Mass Communications,
University of Leicester,
England

*** * * Section One * * * (for all respondents) * * ***

Date: / /1373

Number: ●●●●●

School:

1. Sex: male • female •
2. Date of Birth: 13
3. Level of study: 1st year • 2nd year • 3rd year • 4th year •
4. Place of Birth: Tehran • Other provincial capitals •
 Other cities • Abroad • rural areas • .

5. How many years you have lived in your present area of Tehran:
 1. since my birth • 2. since I was () years old
6. What was the mean of your marks during last academic year? / .
7. How many Re-exams you had to pass last year?
 1. none • 2. one • 3. two •
 4. three • 5. four • 6. five or more •
8. How many times have you failed in your studies till now?
 1. never • 2. once • 3. twice • 4. three or more times •
9. How many people are living with you in your home? () people
10. You are 1st • 2nd • 3rd • 4th or next • child of your family.
11. Type of your residence:
 1. owned apartment • 2. owned house
 3. rented • 4. organisational • 3. paying mortgage •
12. Which of these facilities you have in your house:
 1. b/w TV • 2. colour TV • 3. radio • 4. refrigerator • 5. freeze •
 6. furniture • 7. paintings • 8. wall carpet • 9. piano • 10. facsimile •
 11. computer • 12. washing machine • 13. Dish Washer • 14. telephone •
13. What is your father's job (please be specific):.....
14. What is your mother's job (please be specific):.....
15. How many times have you been in foreign countries?
 1. never • 2. once • 3. twice • 4. three or more times •
16. If you have gone abroad, which countries:
 1. 2. 3. 4.
17. If you have gone abroad, overall for how long?
 1. less than one month • 2. one to two months • 3. three to four months •
 4. five to six months • 5. six to twelve months • 6. more than a year •
18. How many times a week do you or any other member of your family buy newspapers?
 1. everyday or subscribed • 2. most days • 3. one or two days •
 4. rarely • 5. never •
19. How many times a week do you read newspapers?
 1. everyday • 2. most days • 3. one or two days •
 4. rarely • 5. never •
20. Which magazines do you (or any one else in your family) buy? Please, name them.
 1. 2. 3. 4.
21. How many magazines do you normally read in an average week:
 1. none • 2. one or two • 3. three or four • 4. five or more •
22. Which magazines do you usually read? Please, name them.
 1. 2. 3. 4.
23. How many hours do you listen to radio in a day?
 1. none • 2. one hour • 3. two hours • 4. three hours • 5. four hours or more •

24. Which radio programmes do you usually listen? Please, name up to maximum six choices.

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |

25. How often do you go to the cinema?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. never • | 2. rarely • | 3. once a month • |
| 4. twice or three times a months • | | 5. four times or more • |

26. How many hours do you watch TV in an average week day?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. none • | 2. less than one hour • | 3. one to two hours • |
| 4. three to four hours • | 5. five hours or more • | |

27. How many hours do you watch TV during weekends and other holidays?

1. none • 2. one hour • 3. two hours • 4. three hours • 5. four hour or more •

28. Which TV programs do you watch usually? Please, mark up to six choices according to your preference.

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |

29. Overall, which television content types do you prefer?

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. news • | 2. sports • | 3. religious • | 4. culture and art • |
| 5. film • | 6. political • | 7. entertainment • | 8. educational • |
| 9. advertisement • | 10. documentary • | 11. quiz shows • | 12. war programs • |

30. Do you have a video set now?

- yes • no •

31. If yes, when was your first VCR purchase? 13 .

32. If you don't have a video machine now, did you had one before?

1. Yes • we had for () years before 2. no, we never had one •

33. Do you own a video camera now?

- yes • no •

34. Do you own a satellite dish and receiver now?

- yes • no •

***** Section Two *** (for all respondents) *****

1. How much do you believe that boys and girls must be trained differently because they will have different roles later in their lives?

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |

2. How much do you think that girls and boys in their choice of clothes and make-up should obey other people and society?

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |

3. How much do you agree with this belief that having disco and ballet in a country shows the development of that country?

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • |
| 3. Average • | 4. Very little • |
| | 5. Very very little or not at all • |

4. How much do you believe that love is the best way of choosing a spouse for marriage?

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |

5. How much do you think that pre-marital friendship between boys and girls might destroy their happiness in marriage life?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • |
| 3. Average • | 4. Very little • |
| | 5. Very very little or not at all • |
6. How much do you wish that you could play Jazz and other non-traditional musical instruments skilfully?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • |
| 3. Average • | 4. Very little • |
| | 5. Very very little or not at all • |
7. How much do you think that 'Break Dance' and similar dances belong to the hedonistic and deteriorated culture of the Western youth?
- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |
8. What would you do if you discover after your marriage that your spouse has had a long friendship (speaking, going out together and like that) with some one else before knowing you?
1. I would divorce him/her •
 2. I will be disappointed but would continue to my marriage •
 3. I would continue my marriage without any problem •
 4. my spouses previous life has nothing to do with me •
9. What do you think about any pre-marital sexual relationship for *boys*:
1. In all situations, it is absolutely morally wrong as well as punishable •
 2. In all situations, it is absolutely morally wrong but not punishable •
 3. It is generally wrong but in some conditions it is not wrong or punishable •
 4. It is never and under no circumstances wrong or punishable •
10. What do you think about any pre-marital sexual relationship for *girls*:
1. In all situations, it is absolutely morally wrong as well as punishable •
 2. In all situations, it is absolutely morally wrong but not punishable •
 3. It is generally wrong but in some conditions it is not wrong or punishable •
 4. It is never and under no circumstances wrong or punishable •
11. How much do you think that having a beautiful Farsi hand-writing and learning it is necessary for all Iranian students?
- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |
12. How much do you believe that learning languages such as English, French or German are necessary for all Iranian students?
- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |
13. How much do you think that learning Arabic language is necessary for all Iranian students?
- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • | 3. Average • |
| 4. Very little • | 5. Very very little or not at all • | |
14. How much do you agree that owning a video or a satellite receiver is against the cultural ideals and plans of the Islamic Republic?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • |
| 3. Average • | 4. Very little • |
| | 5. Very very little or not at all • |
15. How much do feel satisfied with your life in the educational, health, economic, familial, and political senses?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Very very much • | 2. Very much • |
| 3. Average • | 4. Very little • |
| | 5. Very very little or not at all • |

16. Do you think that knowledge is more important for a happy life or money?
1. Both are very important •
 2. money is far more important •
 3. knowledge is far more important
 4. neither can determine happiness •
17. What are the characteristics of your ideal spouse? (Please, specify up to 4 according to their importance.)
1. higher education •
 2. chastity and a good name •
 3. high social and familial position •
 4. beauty •
 5. sociability •
 6. wealth •
 7. artisanship •
 8. traditionality •
 9. physical and spiritual health •
 10. modernity and intellectualism •
 11. religiosity •
 12. else.....
18. How much do you agree with this idea that prohibition of VCR and DBS are violation of the individual's right by the state?
1. Very very much •
 2. Very much •
 3. Average •
 4. Very little •
 5. Very very little or not at all •
19. How much do you think that other people are trustworthy?
1. Very very much •
 2. Very much •
 3. Average •
 4. Very little •
 5. Very very little or not at all •

* * * **Section Three** * * * (for VCR owners) * * *

Dear Student,

The following questions are related to video usage. Therefore, if you don't own a VCR now and in the past you did not own it at least for one year, please, do not answer these questions and skip to Section Four starting from page 11.

1. Do you have a VCR now or just had it before?
 1. We have now •
 2. We had in the past from 13 to 13 .
2. If you only had a video set in the past, please explain the reasons for not owning a set at the present?
3. When was your first VCR purchase? year 13 .
4. How much do you think the following reasons caused or motivated your first VCR purchase? (Please specify up to 5 reasons according to their importance.)
 - A) the difference between your working and TV broadcast hours •
 - B) limited television channels available •
 - C) an incoordination between your tastes and television programs •
 - D) low quality of TV Program •
 - E) limited hours of television broadcast •
 - F) domination of news and war-related programs on television •
 - G) in order to participate in VCR-related discussion with other people •
 - H) because almost everybody had got one •
 - I) to pass my free leisure time •
 - J) Un-attractiveness of television programs •

- L) to use video to watch educational programs •

5. How many VCRs do you own right now?

1. one • 2. two • 3. three or more • .

1. yes my () objected • 2. nobody objected •

1.

2.

<p><u>A. 1st Person:</u> (The one who provides most of the tapes which you watch)</p>	<p><u>your relation:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. brother • 2. sister • 3. father • 4. mother • 5. myself • 6. others • 	<p><u>main source of tapes:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. friends or colleagues • 2. neighbours • 3. purchase 4. the SDCPs • 5. relatives • 6. informal rentals • 7. else •
<p><u>B. 2nd Person:</u> (The one who is provider after the first person)</p>	<p><u>your relation:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. brother • 2. sister • 3. father • 4. mother • 5. myself • 6. others • 	<p><u>main source of tapes:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. friends or colleagues • 2. neighbours • 3. purchase 4. the SDCPs • 5. relatives • 6. informal rentals • 7. else •

1. always • 2. most of the times • 3. some times •
4. rarely • 5. never •

10. How many times in an average year do you record programmes from national TV to watch them later?

1. never • 2. once or twice a year • 3. three or four times •
4. five to ten times • 5. more than ten times •

12. How many of your cassettes are from your own family recordings (e.g., weddings, birth day parties etc.)? () tapes.

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14. How many days do you usually use your VCR in an average week?
1. every day •
 2. five or six days •
 3. three or four days •
 4. one or two days •
 5. rarely; less than one day every week •
 6. don't know •
15. How many **programmes** do you usually watch in an average **weekday**?
1. one •
 2. two or three •
 3. four or more •
 4. don't know •
16. How many **hours** do you usually spent watching video in an average **weekday**?
1. less than one hour •
 2. one to two hours •
 3. two to three hours •
 4. more than three hours •
 5. don't know •
17. How many **programmes** do you usually watch in an average **weekend** day (Fridays or other holidays)?
1. one •
 2. two or three •
 3. four or more •
 4. don't know •
18. How many **hours** do you usually spent watching video in an average **weekend** day (Fridays or other holidays)?
1. less than one hour •
 2. one to two hours •
 3. two to three hours •
 4. more than three hours •
 5. don't know •
- 19., how many **programmes** did you watch **yesterday**?
1. none •
 2. one •
 3. two •
 4. three •
 5. four or more •
20. How many **hours** did you spend watching video **yesterday**?
1. less than one hour •
 2. one to two hours •
 3. two to three hours •
 4. more than three hours •
 5. don't know •
21. What kind of video programs do you like more? Please mark three important categories by 1,2 & 3 respectively.
1. documentaries •
 2. music shows •
 3. films •
 4. educational •
 5. professional •
 6. children's •
 7. light entertainment •
 8. family recordings •
 9. others •
22. What kind of films do you like more? Please mark three important categories by 1,2 & 3 respectively.
1. Iranian movies •
 2. Indian movies •
 3. Russian & East European •
 4. American •
 5. Western European •
 6. Chinese, Japanese and Korean •
 7. Turkish •
 8. Others • (Please specify)
23. In what language do you prefer to watch your films? Please mark two most important ones by 1, 2 & 3 respectively.
1. Farsi •
 2. Russian •
 3. Chinese •
 4. English •
 5. Hindi •
 6. Arabic •
 7. French •
 8. German •
 9. Turkish •
 10. Japanese •
 11. Other •
24. What subjects (movie genres) do you prefer? ? Please mark two most important ones by 1, 2 & 3 respectively.
1. sci-fi •
 2. horror •
 3. police/crime drama •
 4. love stories •
 5. family drama •
 6. 'Western' •
 7. martial arts •
 8. war drama •
 9. comedy •
 10. tragic-drama •
 11. historical •
 12. critical socio-political •
25. Do you think that there has been a change in the **amount of time** you now spend watching VCR with five years ago?
1. No, there's been no difference •
 2. Yes, I watch more now •
 3. Yes, I watch less now •
36. Do you think that there has been a difference in the **kind of programmes** you watch on video now with five years ago?
1. Yes •
 2. No •

37. If yes, please explain the differences and say why?

38. How many times on average do you watch each of the following categories? (Please use X or ✓ marks)

Type of Program	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
1) Documentaries					
2) Iranian films					
3) Chinese & Japanese films					
4) Turkish films					
5) Hindi films					
6) American films					
7) Russian & European films					
8) educational					
9) Iranian music					
10) Western music					
11) Turkish music					
12) Hindi music					
13) professional					
14) light entertainment					
15) family recordings					
16) cartoon and children's					
17) other ()					
18) other ()					

29. The following list contains different activities which people usually have while using their video sets. Please read the list and mark the frequency of your own activities using X or ✓ marks.

Type of activity	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
1) make prior plans for viewing					
2) use magazines or opinion of other people to choose a programme					
3) feel that there are still much more programmes that you want to see					
4) view some parts of the programmes before viewing it with other family members					
5) rent or borrow cassettes only from those sources whom I trust					
6) ask the lender about the suitability of the content for family viewing					
7) use fast-forward through unsuitable scenes					
8) change television channel or switch it off through unsuitable scenes					
9) interrupt unsuitable programmes					
10) feel ashamed while watching unsuitable scenes in front of others					
11) discuss with other co-viewers while watching a program					
12) discuss with other co-viewers after watching a program					
13) discuss with other people about the programmes that I see					
14) wish to live in the places that I see in video programmes.					
15) wish to have the facilities and gadgets that I see on video					
16) try to do something that I have seen on video					
17) feel that the real life of people in foreign countries is like in video programmes					
18) wish to be in the place of movie characters					
19) think that people in video programmes are happier than myself and my acquaintances					

30. The following list contains different controls which families impose on their children's and adolescents' video use. Please read the list and mark the frequency of your own activities using X or ✓ marks.

Type of activity	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
1) keep VCR locked up					
2) require permission to					
3) are sensitive to the kind of films and with whom					
4) are sensitive to the amount of time the respondent spends watching VCR					
5) give priority to studying over watching video					
6) control the source of rented and borrowed cassettes					
7) are sensitive about when the respondent use VCR					
8) review parts of the films before viewing them with family					
9) have discussions on the proper types of films for family viewing					
10) disrupt programmes considered unsuitable					
11) are anxious about possible negative impacts of the video programmes					
12) believe that the life-styles shown in most programmes are not real					
13) prevent or discourage the respondent from watching video altogether					

31. Overall, how much do you think that your family's control over your VCR use is harsh and strict?

1. Very very harsh • 2. Very harsh • 3. Average •
4. Not harsh • 5. Not harsh at all •

32. Overall, how much do you think that your family's control over your VCR use is necessary and useful for you?

1. Very necessary and useful • 2. Necessary and useful • 3. Average •
4. Unnecessary and harmful • 5. Very unnecessary and harmful •

33. In any case, please explain why you think that your family's control over your VCR use is necessary and useful or unnecessary and harmful?

34. After several years of owning and using VCR, please indicate the degree of your satisfaction with: (Please use X or ✓ marks)

Issues	very satisfied	almost satisfied	average	not satisfied	not satisfied at all
1) quality of cassettes					
2) cultural content of cassettes					
3) quantity of films available in the SDCPs					
4) diversity of available films					
5) incompatibility of programs with the culture in the society					
6) quality and quantity of VCR repair services					
7) price of blank and recorded cassettes					
8) quantity of programs available in society					
9) the culture of VCR use in society					
10) the proportion of Iranian production in the VCR market					
11) price of rentals					
12) new cinematic production					

35. Where do you usually watch video? 1. in our home • 2. at my friends and classmates •
3. at my neighbours • 4. at my relatives • 5. else where •

36. with who do you usually watch video in your home? Please specify two most common combinations. 1. all family together • 2. children without parents •
3. children and mother without father • 4. children and father without mother •
5. parents without children •

***** Section Four *** (for non VCR owners) *****

1. Now that you don't have a video at your home and in the past had never had one for more than a year, how often in a month you watch video programmes?

1. always • 2. most days • 3. sometimes • 4. rarely • 5. never •

2. Where do you usually watch video?
friends and classmates • 3. at my neighbours • 4. in school or mosque •
5. else where •

3. What are the main reasons that you do not have a video set? Please specify two most important reasons.

1. our studies are more important •
2. VCR is expensive •
3. shortage of good and proper programs in society •
4. my parents worry about VCR's negative moral impacts •
5. family members have different tastes and opinions •
6. family's traditionalism •
7. VCR is almost religiously forbidden •
8. else (please specify) •

***** Section Five *** (for all respondents) *****

1. How much do you agree with the following statements. (Please use X or ✓marks)

Issues	totally agree	almost agree	average	almost disagree	totally disagree
1) VCR increases the amount of time family members spend together					
2) VCR is a proper means for passing free time					
3) most of the available programs are not proper for family viewing					
4) video creates fights and disagreements among family members					
5) most families are very sensitive about their children's video use					
6) video facilitates watching programs which are not available on television or at cinemas					
7) VCR changes the people's attitudes toward life and society					
8) VCR increases the people's awareness about other cultures and societies					
9) VCR changes adolescents' behaviour in school and family					
10) VCR decreases the quality of students education					

2. Regarding its implications, how much do you think that VCR is a useful or harmful technology?

1. very useful •
2. useful •
3. average •
4. harmful •
5. very harmful •

3. What kind of effects do you think that VCR has had on its users attitudes perceptions about society, life and culture? Please explain.

4. What kind of negative effects do you think that VCR can have on children's and adolescents' mentality and behaviour? How we can decrease these effects?

5. Despite all the existing legal limitations, how much do you think that people can find the programs they want to watch?

1. always • 2. most days • 3. sometimes • 4. rarely •
5. never •

6. Regarding the content of video programs, what kind of content types or genres and subjects do you consider as harmful for children and adolescents?

7. Some people believe that VCR's expansion in the society was generally because of the limitations of television and cinemas, please explain if you agree with this idea and what kind of changes do you think that must take place in these national media?

Dear Student,

In the end I would like to thank you again
for your sincere cooperation. Also may I use
the chance to wish you success in your life
and education.

Mehdi Montazer-Ghaem

پرسشنامه الف (ویژه دانش آموزان)

دانش آموز گرامی،

در ابتدا از اینکه قبول کردید در اجرای طرح حاضر همکاری نمایید تشکر کرده و برایتان آرزوی توفیق می‌نمایم. پرسشنامه‌ای که پیش روی شماست به عنوان بخشی از یک کار تحقیقی طراحی گردیده است. این تحقیق توسط اینجانب برای اخذ مدرک دکترا در رشته جامعه‌شناسی رسانه‌های جمعی در دانشگاه لستر، انگلستان، انجام می‌گیرد. هدف این تحقیق شناخت نوع مصرف خانواده‌ها و بویژه جوانان از وسایل ارتباط جمعی می‌باشد که در آن، بر کاربرد ویدئو تکیه شده و همچنین سئوالاتی برای سنجش گرایش‌های عمومی جوانان نسبت به مسائل فرهنگی گنجانیده شده است. همانطور که قبلاً ملاحظه کرده‌اید، انتخاب شما کاملاً بطور تصادفی بوده و نیز نتایج بدست آمده پس از تبدیل به اعداد و ارقام توسط کامپیوتر استخراج خواهد شد و به هیچوجه نیازی به ذکر نام و نام خانوادگی شما وجود ندارد. با توجه به این موضوع می‌توانید با کمال اطمینان اطلاعات خواسته شده را تکمیل کرده و باورهای واقعی خودتان را ابراز نمایید.

دانش آموز گرامی،

شما که انشاءاً... چند سال بعد به انجام تحقیقات مشابه برای اخذ مدارک عالی دانشگاهی خواهید پرداخت مطمئناً اطلاع دارید که انجام تحقیقات اجتماعی متکی بر صحت جوابهای پاسخگویان می‌باشد. از این رو، خواهشمند است برای هرچه بهتر انجام شدن تحقیق حاضر و با اطمینان کامل از بی‌نام بودن پرسشنامه‌ها، در پاسخگویی به سئوالات آزادی کامل خودتان را حفظ نمایید. در خاتمه ضمن آرزوی مجدد توفیق شما، در صورت بروز هرگونه مشکل به هنگام پاسخ گفتن به سئوالات می‌توانید از پرسشگران حاضر سئوال بفرمایید.

با تشکر

مهدی منتظر قائم

دانشجوی دکترای جامعه‌شناسی رسانه‌های جمعی

دانشگاه لستر - انگلستان

*** بخش اول *** (ویژه کلیه پاسخگویان) ***

تاریخ:	۱۳۷۳/ /
شماره:	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
مدرسه:	

۱- جنس: ☐ مرد ☐ زن

۲- تاریخ تولد: ۱۳

۳- سال تحصیلی:

نظام فعلی: ۱- سال اول ☐ ۲- سال دوم ☐ ۳- سال سوم ☐ ۴- سال چهارم ☐

نظام جدید: ۱- سال اول (ترم اول و دوم) ☐ ۲- سال دوم (ترم اول و دوم) ☐ ۳- سال سوم (ترم اول و دوم) ☐

۴- سال چهارم (ترم اول و دوم) ☐

۴- محل تولد:

۱- تهران ☐ ۲- مراکز استانها ☐ ۳- سایر شهرها ☐ ۴- مناطق روستایی ☐ ۵- خارج از کشور ☐

۵- چند سال است که شما در منطقه شهر داری فعلی خودتان ساکن هستید:

۱- از هنگام تولد ☐ ۲- از زمانی که () سال داشتم ☐

۶- معدل کل نمرات شما در سال تحصیلی گذشته چقدر بود؟ /

۷- در سال تحصیلی گذشته چند تجدیدی داشتید؟

۱- اصلاً ☐ ۲- یک تجدیدی ☐ ۳- دو تجدیدی ☐

۴- سه تجدیدی ☐ ۵- چهار تجدیدی ☐ ۶- پنج یا بیشتر ☐

۸- تاحال در طول دوران تحصیلی چند بار مردود شده‌اید؟

۱- اصلاً ☐ ۲- یک بار ☐ ۳- دو بار ☐ ۴- سه بار و بیشتر ☐

۹- در حال حاضر با احتساب خود شما چند نفر در منزلتان زندگی می‌کنند؟ () نفر

۱۰- شما چندمین فرزند خانواده‌تان هستید؟ فرزند ()

۱۱- نوع مسکن خودتان را لطفاً مشخص فرمایید:

۱- آپارتمان شخصی ☐ ۲- خانه شخصی ☐ ۳- اجاردای یارهنی ☐

۴- سازه‌ی ☐ ۵- اقساطی شخصی ☐ ۶- سایر (☐)

۱۲- کدامیک از امکانات و تجهیزات زیر در منزل موجود است:

۱- تلویزیون سیاه و سفید ☐ ۲- تلویزیون رنگی ☐ ۳- رادیو و استریو ☐ ۴- یخچال ☐

۵- فریزر ☐ ۶- مبل ☐ ۷- تابلو نقاشی یا مینیاتور ☐ ۸- فرش دیواری ☐ ۹- پیانو ☐ ۱۰- دستگاه فاکس ☐

۱۱- کامپیوتر ☐ ۱۲- ماشین ظرفشویی ☐ ۱۳- ماشین لباسشویی ☐ ۱۴- تلفن ☐

۱۳- شغل پدر شما چیست؟ (لطفاً بدقت و بطور کامل بنویسید.)

۱۴- شغل مادرتان چیست؟ (لطفاً بدقت و بطور کامل بنویسید.)

۱۵- شما تا حال چند بار به کشورهای خارجی مسافرت کرده‌اید؟

۱- هرگز ☐ ۲- یک بار ☐ ۳- دوبار ☐ ۴- سه بار یا بیشتر ☐

۱۶- در صورتیکه تا حال به خارج مسافرت کرده‌اید، لطفاً ذکر کنید چه کشورهایی:

۱- ☐ ۲- ☐ ۳- ☐ ۴- ☐

۱۷- در صورتیکه تا حال به خارج مسافرت کرده‌اید، لطفاً ذکر کنید در مجموع مسافرت شما چقدر طول کشیده است؟

۱- کمتر از یک ماه ☐ ۲- یک تا دو ماه ☐ ۳- سه تا چهار ماه ☐

۴- پنج تا شش ماه ☐ ۵- شش ماه تا یک سال ☐ ۶- بیشتر از یک سال ☐

۱۸- چندبار در هفته شما یا دیگر اعضای خانواده‌تان روزنامه خریداری می‌نمایند؟

۱- مشترک هستیم یا هر روز ☐ ۲- بیشتر روزها ☐ ۳- یک یا دو روز در هفته ☐ ۴- بندرت ☐ ۵- هرگز ☐

۱۹- چند بار در هفته شما روزنامه می‌خوانید؟

۱- هر روز ☐ ۲- بیشتر روزها ☐ ۳- یک یا دو روز در هفته ☐ ۴- بندرت ☐ ۵- هرگز ☐

۲۰- چه مجلاتی را شما یا دیگر اعضای خانواده‌تان معمولاً خریداری می‌کنید؟ لطفاً نام آنها را بنویسید

۱- ☐ ۲- ☐ ۳- ☐ ۴- ☐

۲۱- بطور متوسط در طول یک هفته چند مجله می‌خوانید؟

۱- اصلاً ☐ ۲- یک یا دو ☐ ۳- سه یا چهار ☐ ۴- پنج یا بیشتر ☐

۲۲- چه مجلاتی را شما معمولاً می‌خوانید؟ لطفاً نام آنها را بنویسید

۱- ☐ ۲- ☐ ۳- ☐ ۴- ☐

۲۳- در یک روز معمولی، شما چند ساعت رادیو گوش می‌کنید؟

۱- اصلاً ☐ ۲- یک ☐ ۳- دو ☐ ۴- سه ☐ ۵- چهار یا بیشتر ☐

۲۴- شما معمولاً کدام برنامه‌های رادیویی را گوش می‌کنید؟ لطفاً حداکثر ۶ مورد را به ترتیب علاقه‌تان به برنامه نام ببرید.

۱- ☐ ۲- ☐ ۳- ☐ ۴- ☐ ۵- ☐ ۶- ☐

۲۵- بطور معمولی شما چند بار در طول یک ماه به سینما می‌روید؟

۱- اصلاً ☐ ۲- خیلی بندرت ☐ ۳- یک بار در ماه ☐ ۴- دو یا سه بار ☐ ۵- چهار بار یا بیشتر ☐

۲۶- در روزهای معمولی هفته (ایام غیر تعطیل) شما معمولاً چند ساعت صرف تماشای تلویزیون می‌کنید؟

۱- هرگز ☐ ۲- کمتر از یک ساعت ☐ ۳- یک یا دو ساعت ☐ ۴- سه یا چهار ساعت ☐ ۵- پنج ساعت یا بیشتر ☐

۲۷- در روزهای تعطیل هفته (مانند جمعه‌ها یا تعطیلی‌های دیگر) شما معمولاً چند ساعت صرف تماشای تلویزیون می‌کنید؟

۱- هرگز ☐ ۲- کمتر از یک ساعت ☐ ۳- یک یا دو ساعت ☐ ۴- سه یا چهار ساعت ☐ ۵- پنج ساعت یا بیشتر ☐

۲۸- شما معمولاً کدام برنامه‌های تلویزیونی را در طول هفته‌های گذشته تماشا می‌کردید؟ لطفاً حداکثر ۶ مورد به ترتیب علاقه‌تان به برنامه نام ببرید.

۱- ۲- ۳- ۴- ۵- ۶-

۲۹- در کل شما چه نوع برنامه‌های تلویزیونی را تماشا می‌کنید؟ لطفاً با اعداد ۱ تا ۴ چهار مقوله را به ترتیب علاقه‌تان مشخص کنید. اعداد ۱ تا ۴ را در داخل خانه‌های مقابل بگذارید.

۱- برنامه اخبار ☐ ۲- برنامه‌های ورزشی ☐ ۳- برنامه‌های مذهبی و سخنرانی‌ها و خطبه‌ها ☐
 ۴- برنامه‌های هنری و ادبی ☐ ۵- فیلم و سریال ☐ ۶- تفسیرها و برنامه‌های سیاسی ☐
 ۷- برنامه‌های تفریحی و سرگرم‌کننده ☐ ۸- برنامه‌های درسی و آموزشی ☐ ۹- آگهیهای تجاری ☐
 ۱۰- برنامه‌های مستند و حیات وحش ☐ ۱۱- مسابقه‌های تلویزیونی ☐ ۱۲- برنامه‌های جنگی و ایثارگران ☐
 ۳۰- آیا شما در حال حاضر در منزلتان دستگاه ویدئو دارید؟ ☐ بلی ☐ خیر

۳۱- در صورتیکه در حال حاضر ویدئو دارید، در چه سال اولین ویدئوتان را خریداری کردید؟ در سال ۱۳

۳۲- در صورتیکه در حال حاضر ویدئو ندارید، آیا در گذشته داشتید؟

۱- بلی ☐ برای مدت () سال ویدئو داشتیم ☐ ۲- خیر هرگز نداشتیم ☐

۳۳- آیا در حال حاضر در منزلتان دوربین فیلمبرداری ویدئویی دارید؟ ☐ بلی ☐ خیر

۳۴- آیا در حال حاضر در منزلتان آنتن (بشقاب) ماهواره‌ای دارید؟ ☐ بلی ☐ خیر

*** بخش دوم *** (ویژه کلیه پاسخگویان) ***

۱- چقدر شما اعتقاد دارید که دخترها و پسرها بدلیل آنکه در زندگی آتی خود نقشها و مسئولیتهای متفاوتی را به عهده خواهند گرفت، باید به شیوه‌های متفاوتی تربیت شوند؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۲- به نظر شما چقدر دخترها و پسرها در انتخاب نوع لباس و آرایش ظاهری خود باید تابع معیارهای دیگران و جامعه باشند؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۳- برخی از مردم معتقدند که داشتن دیسکو (دانسینگ) و یا باله حق و نشانه ترقی هر جامعه پیشرفته است، شما چقدر با این عقیده موافقت می‌کنید؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۴- چقدر شما با این باور موافقت می‌کنید که عشق بهترین راه انتخاب همسر آینده برای دخترها و پسرهاست؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۵- به اعتقاد شما داشتن روابط آزاد دوستانه بین دخترها و پسرها قبل از ازدواجشان چقدر می‌تواند مانع خوشبختی آنها در زندگی زناشویی و ازدواجشان باشد؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۶- شما معمولاً چقدر آروز می‌کنید کاش نواختن سازهای موسیقی جاز و سایر سازهای مشابه و غیر سنتی را بطور استادانه بلد بودید؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۷- شما چقدر با این عقیده موافقت می‌کنید که بر یک دُئس و سایر رقص‌های مشابه متعلق به فرهنگ پوچی‌گرا و منحط جوانان غربی است؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۸- اگر شما پس از ازدواج بفهمید که همسران قبل از آشنایی با شما با فرد دیگری (در حد حرف زدن و بیرون رفتن با هم) آشنایی داشته چه اقدامی می‌کنید؟

۱- طلاقش می‌دهم یا از او طلاق می‌گیرم ☐ ۲- به ازدواجمان با دلخوری ادامه می‌دهم ☐ ۳- به ازدواجمان بدون هیچ دلخوری ادامه می‌دهم ☐ ۴- اصلاً گذشته همسر قبل از ازدواج با من مهم نیست ☐

۹- به نظر شما داشتن روابط جنسی با دیگران برای پسرها قبل از ازدواجشان چگونه است؟

۱- در تمام موارد خطا، جرم و قابل مجازات است ☐ ۲- در تمام موارد خطاست اما جرم قابل مجازات نیست ☐ ۳- عموماً خطاست اما در شرایط خاص چندان خطا و قابل مجازات نیست ☐ ۴- اصلاً و تحت هر شرایطی خطا و جرم نیست ☐

۱۰- به نظر شما داشتن روابط جنسی با دیگران برای دخترها قبل از ازدواجشان چگونه است؟

۱- در تمام موارد خطا، جرم و قابل مجازات است ☐ ۲- در تمام موارد خطاست اما جرم قابل مجازات نیست ☐ ۳- عموماً خطاست اما در شرایط خاص چندان خطا و قابل مجازات نیست ☐ ۴- اصلاً و تحت هر شرایطی خطا و جرم نیست ☐

۱۱- شما چقدر بر این باورید که داشتن دستخط فارسی زیبا و یادگیری آن برای هر جوان ایرانی لازم و ضروری است؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۱۲- شما چقدر بر این باورید که آموختن کامل زبان‌هایی مانند: آلمانی، انگلیسی، فرانسوی و غیره برای هر جوان ایرانی لازم و ضروری است؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۱۳- شما چقدر بر این باورید که آموختن کامل زبان عربی برای هر جوان ایرانی لازم و ضروری است؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۱۴- شما چقدر با این عقیده موافقت می‌کنید که داشتن و استفاده از ویدئو به معنی مخالفت با برنامه‌ها و آرمان‌های فرهنگی جمهوری اسلامی است؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۱۵- شما مجموعاً چقدر از زندگی خودتان (از نظر تحصیلی، سلامتی، اقتصادی، خانوادگی، سیاسی) راضی هستید؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۱۶- به نظر شما از بین دو عامل ثروت و علم کدامیک برای خوشبختی و سعادت مهمتر است؟

۱- هر دو عامل ثروت و علم بطور یکسان اهمیت زیادی دارند ☐ ۲- عامل ثروت مهمتر از میزان علم آدمی است ☐ ۳- علم مهمتر از میزان ثروت آدمی است ☐ ۴- هیچکدام اهمیت زیادی برای خوشبختی ندارند ☐

۱۷- از نظر شما بهترین ویژگی‌های یک همسر ایده‌آل کدام است؟ (لطفاً حداکثر ۴ مورد را به ترتیب و اهمیت با شماره‌های ۱، ۲، ۳ و ۴ مشخص کنید)

۱- تحصیلات بالا ☐ ۲- پاکدامنی و متانت ☐ ۳- موقعیت اجتماعی و خانوادگی و شغلی بالا ☐ ۴- زیبایی صورت و اندام ☐ ۵- خوش‌مشرب و اجتماعی بودن ☐ ۶- ثروت و امکانات مالی بالا ☐ ۷- داشتن هنرهای خوب ☐ ۸- وابستگی به سنت‌های اخلاقی و رفتاری جامعه ☐ ۹- سلامتی جسم و روح ☐ ۱۰- آزاداندیشی و نوگرانی ☐ ۱۱- التزام عملی به دستورات مذهبی ☐ ۱۲- سایر (نام ببرید) ☐

۱۸- برخی معتقدند ممنوعیت ویدئو در گذشته و ماهواره در حال حاضر از طرف دولت، نشان دهندۀ تجاوز دولت به حقوق افراد جامعه و غلط می‌باشد شما تا چه حد با این عقیده موافقت می‌کنید؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

۱۹- به اعتقاد شما بیشتر مردم تا چه حد قابل اعتماد هستند؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم یا اصلاً ☐

*** بخش سوم *** (ویژه پاسخگویان دارای دستگاه ویدئو) ***

دانش آموز گرامی،

ضمن تشکر از همکاری شما، سئوالات بخش سوم پرسشنامه مربوط به بهره‌وری مردم ایران از رسانه ویدئو می‌باشد. از اینرو، در صورتیکه شما در حال حاضر ویدئو ندارید و در گذشته نیز حداقل برای مدت یکسال ویدئو نداشته‌اید، لطفاً این بخش را حذف کرده به بخش چهارم (از صفحه ۱۱) مراجعه کنید.

۱- آیا شما در حال حاضر نیز ویدئو دارید یا اینکه تنها در گذشته داشته‌اید؟

۱- هنوز هم ویدئو داریم ☐ ۲- در گذشته از سال ۱۳ تا سال ۱۳ داشتیم ☐

۲- در صورتیکه شما تنها در گذشته دارای دستگاه ویدئو بودید و در حال حاضر ندارید، لطفاً علت از دست دادن مالکیت خودتان را بنویسید؟

۳- در چه سالی برای اولین بار دستگاه ویدئو خریدید؟ سال ۱۳

۴- فکر می‌کنید دلایل زیر تا چه اندازه باعث یا مشوق شما برای خرید دستگاه ویدئو بوده‌اند؟ لطفاً حداکثر ۵ مقوله را به ترتیب اهمیت با نوشتن ۱، ۲، ۳، ۴ و ۵ در خانه‌های مقابل مشخص فرمایید.

الف) عدم هماهنگی بین ساعات کار و اوقات فراغت شما و ساعات بخش تلویزیون ☐

ب) محدودیت کانالهای تلویزیونی در دسترس ☐

ج) عدم هماهنگی بین برنامه‌های مورد علاقه شما و برنامه‌های تلویزیون ☐

د) کیفیت پایین برنامه‌های تلویزیون ☐

هـ) محدودیت زمان بخش تلویزیون ☐

و) سنخ اخبار و برنامه‌های مربوط به جنگ در دوران بعد از انقلاب ☐

ز) برای اینکه امکان دنبال کردن بحث‌های مربوط به ویدئو با دیگر مردم فراهم گردد ☐

ح) بدلیل اینکه تقریباً همه مردم دسترسی به ویدئو داشتند ☐

ط) تأمین امکان گذران اوقات فراغت ☐

ی) عدم جاذبه برنامه‌های تلویزیونی ☐

ک) محدود بودن امکان تفریح و گذران اوقات فراغت در خارج از منزل ☐

ل) استفاده از ویدئو برای دیدن برنامه‌های آموزشی و درسی ☐

م) سایر (لطفاً توضیح دهید) ☐

۵- شما در حال حاضر چند دستگاه ویدئو در منزلتان دارید؟

۱- یک دستگاه ☐ ۲- دو دستگاه ☐ ۳- سه دستگاه یا بیشتر ☐

۶- آیا در موقع خرید اولین دستگاه ویدئو، کسی از اعضای خانواده‌تان مخالفت می‌کرد؟

۱- بلی، چه کسی؟ () مخالف بود ☐ ۲- خیر هیچکس مخالف نبود ☐

۷- دلیل یا دلایل ایشان برای مخالفت با خرید دستگاه ویدئو چه بود؟

۱-

۲-

۸- معمولاً در خانواده شما چه فرد یا افرادی مسئول تهیه برنامه‌های ویدئویی برای استفاده خانواده هستند؟ لطفاً اطلاعات جدول زیر را با توجه به اهمیت نقش وی در تهیه برنامه‌های ویدئویی تکمیل فرمایید.

الف) فرد اول (یعنی فردی که بیشترین تعداد نوارهای ویدئویی را برای خانواده تان تهیه می‌کند)

نسبت وی با شما (فقط یک مورد)	منبع اصلی وی برای تهیه نوارها (فقط حداکثر دو مورد)
۱- برادر <input type="checkbox"/>	۱- دوستان و همکاران <input type="checkbox"/>
۲- خواهر <input type="checkbox"/>	۲- همسایه‌ها <input type="checkbox"/>
۳- پدر <input type="checkbox"/>	۳- خرید نوارها <input type="checkbox"/>
۴- مادر <input type="checkbox"/>	۴- فروشگاه‌های ویدئویی ارشاد <input type="checkbox"/>
۵- خودم <input type="checkbox"/>	۵- اقوام <input type="checkbox"/>
۶- سایر <input type="checkbox"/>	۶- اجاره دهندگان غیررسمی <input type="checkbox"/>
	۷- سایر <input type="checkbox"/>

ب) فرد دوم (یعنی فردی که پس از فرد اول بیشترین تعداد نوارها را برای خانواده تان تهیه می‌کند)

نسبت وی با شما	منبع اصلی وی برای تهیه نوارها
۱- برادر <input type="checkbox"/>	۱- دوستان و همکاران <input type="checkbox"/>
۲- خواهر <input type="checkbox"/>	۲- همسایه‌ها <input type="checkbox"/>
۳- پدر <input type="checkbox"/>	۳- خرید نوارها <input type="checkbox"/>
۴- مادر <input type="checkbox"/>	۴- فروشگاه‌های ویدئویی ارشاد <input type="checkbox"/>
۵- خودم <input type="checkbox"/>	۵- اقوام <input type="checkbox"/>
۶- سایر <input type="checkbox"/>	۶- اجاره دهندگان غیررسمی <input type="checkbox"/>
	۷- سایر <input type="checkbox"/>

۹- شما با چه تناوبی برای نوارهایی که استفاده می‌کنید پول می‌پردازید؟

۱- همیشه ☐ ۲- بیشتر اوقات ☐ ۳- معمولاً ☐ ۴- بندرت ☐ ۵- هیچوقت ☐

۱۰- بطور متوسط چند بار در طول سال شما برنامه‌هایی را از طریق تلویزیون ضبط می‌کنید تا بعداً مجدداً مشاهده کنید؟

۱- هرگز ☐ ۲- یک یا دو بار در سال ☐ ۳- سه یا چهار بار در سال ☐ ۴- پنج تا ده بار در سال ☐ ۵- بیشتر از ده بار در سال ☐

۱۱- شما در حال حاضر چند نوار ویدئویی در منزلتان دارید؟ تعداد () عدد

۱۲- چند تا از نوارهای فوق مربوط به خانواده یا اقوام شماست که از مراسم عروسی، جشن تولد یا غیره می‌باشد؟
تعداد () عدد

۱۳- چندبار در سال معمولاً شما نوارهای مربوط به خانواده یا اقوام خودتان را تماشا می‌کنید یا از دیگران قرض می‌کنید تا پس از مشاهده بازگردانید؟ () بار

۱۴- بطور متوسط در طول یک هفته شما چند روز از ویدئوی خودتان استفاده می‌کنید؟

۱- تقریباً هر روز ☐ ۲- بیشتر از چهار روز در هفته ☐ ۳- دو یا سه روز در هفته ☐ ۴- تنها یک روز در هفته ☐ ۵- بندرت و کمتر از یک روز در هفته ☐ ۶- نمی‌دانم ☐

۱۵- بطور متوسط در روزهای عادی و غیر تعطیل هفته، شما چند برنامه را از طریق ویدئو مشاهده می‌کنید؟

۱- تنها یک برنامه ☐ ۲- دو یا سه برنامه ☐ ۳- چهار برنامه یا بیشتر ☐ ۴- نمی‌دانم ☐

۱۶- بطور متوسط در روزهای عادی و غیر تعطیل هفته، شما چند ساعت برای مشاهده برنامه‌های ویدئویی صرف می‌کنید؟

۱- کمتر از یک ساعت ☐ ۲- یک تا دو ساعت ☐ ۳- دو تا سه ساعت ☐ ۴- بیشتر از سه ساعت ☐ ۵- نمی‌دانم ☐

۱۷- بطور متوسط در روزهای تعطیل هفته (جمعه‌ها و سایر تعطیلات)، شما چند برنامه را از طریق ویدئو مشاهده می‌کنید؟

۱- تنها یک برنامه ☐ ۲- دو یا سه برنامه ☐ ۳- چهار برنامه یا بیشتر ☐ ۴- نمی‌دانم ☐

۱۸- بطور متوسط در روزهای تعطیل هفته شما چند ساعت برای مشاهده برنامه‌های ویدئویی صرف می‌کنید؟

۱- کمتر از یک ساعت ☐ ۲- یک تا دو ساعت ☐ ۳- دو تا سه ساعت ☐ ۴- بیشتر از سه ساعت ☐ ۵- نمی‌دانم ☐

۱۹- شما روز گذشته چند برنامه را از طریق ویدئو تماشا کردید؟

۱- هیچ ☐ ۲- تنها یک برنامه ☐ ۳- دو برنامه ☐ ۴- سه برنامه ☐ ۵- چهار یا بیشتر ☐

۲۰- شما روز گذشته چند ساعت صرف تماشای ویدئو کردید؟

۱- هیچ ☐ ۲- کمتر از یک ساعت ☐ ۳- بین یک تا دو ساعت ☐ ۴- بین دو تا سه ساعت ☐ ۵- بیشتر از سه ساعت ☐

۲۱- شما چه نوع برنامه‌های ویدئویی را بیشتر دوست دارید؟ لطفاً سه مورد را به ترتیب اهمیت با شماره‌های ۱، ۲ و ۳ مشخص فرمایید.

۱- برنامه‌های مستند ☐ ۲- برنامه‌های موسیقی و آواز ☐ ۳- فیلم سینمایی ☐ ۴- برنامه‌های آموزشی و درسی ☐

۵- برنامه‌های تخصصی و شغلی ☐ ۶- برنامه‌های کودکان و کارتون ☐ ۷- برنامه‌های سیرک و شعبده‌بازی ☐ ۸- فیلم‌های مربوط به اقوام و مراسم آنها ☐ ۹- سایر ☐

۲۲- شما چه فیلم‌های سینمایی را بیشتر دوست دارید؟ لطفاً حداکثر سه مورد را به ترتیب اهمیت با شماره‌های ۱، ۲ و ۳ مشخص فرمایید.

۱- فیلم‌های ایرانی ☐ ۲- فیلم‌های هندی ☐ ۳- فیلم‌های روسی و اروپای شرقی ☐

۴- فیلم‌های آمریکایی ☐ ۵- فیلم‌های اروپایی ☐ ۶- فیلم‌های چینی، کره‌ای و ژاپنی ☐

۷- فیلم‌های ترکیه‌ای ☐ ۸- سایر (لطفاً مشخص فرمایید) ☐

۲۳- شما ترجیح می‌دهید برنامه‌های ویدئویی را بیشتر با چه زبانی مشاهده کنید؟ لطفاً حداکثر سه زبان را به ترتیب اهمیت و با شماره‌های ۱، ۲ و ۳ مشخص فرمایید.

۱- فارسی ☐ ۲- روسی ☐ ۳- چینی ☐ ۴- انگلیسی ☐ ۵- هندی ☐ ۶- عربی ☐

۷- فرانسوی ☐ ۸- آلمانی ☐ ۹- ترکی ☐ ۱۰- ژاپنی ☐ ۱۱- سایر ☐

۲۴- شما چه سوژه‌ها و موضوعاتی را بیشتر ترجیح می‌دهید؟ لطفاً حداکثر سه مورد را به ترتیب اهمیت و با شماره‌های ۱، ۲ و ۳ مشخص فرمایید.

۱- سوژه‌های تخیلی-علمی ☐ ۲- سوژه‌های ترسناک ☐ ۳- سوژه‌های پلیسی و جنایی ☐

۴- سوژه‌های عشقی ☐ ۵- سوژه‌های خانوادگی ☐ ۶- سوژه‌های وسترن ☐

۷- سوژه‌های رزمی و مبارزه ☐ ۸- سوژه‌های جنگی ☐ ۹- سوژه‌های سرگرم‌کننده و تفریحی ☐

۱۰- سوژه‌های ترازیک و متاثرکننده ☐ ۱۱- سوژه‌های تاریخی ☐ ۱۲- سوژه‌های اجتماعی و سیاسی و انتقادی ☐

۲۵- آیا فکر می‌کنید بین الان و مثلاً ۵ سال پیش تغییری در میزان ساعاتی که شما صرف تماشای ویدئو می‌نمودید بوجود آمده است.

۱- خیر تغییر نکرده است ☐ ۲- الان بیشتر تماشا می‌کنم ☐ ۳- الان کمتر تماشا می‌کنم ☐

۲۶- آیا فکر می‌کنید بین الان و مثلاً ۵ سال پیش تغییری در نوع برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌هایی که تماشا می‌کردید بوجود آمده است؟

۱- بلی ☐ ۲- خیر ☐

۲۷- اگر بلی، لطفاً بنویسید چه نوع تغییری بوجود آمده است؟

۲۸- بطور متوسط در طول هر هفته چندبار از فیلم‌ها و برنامه‌های زیر استفاده می‌کنید؟ با گذاشتن علامت \sqrt یا X در محل مربوطه نظرتان را مشخص کنید

نوع برنامه	هر روز	بیشتر روزها	دو یا سه روز	یکروز یا بندرت	هرگز
۱- برنامه‌های مستند					
۲- فیلم‌های سینمایی ایرانی					
۳- فیلم‌های سینمایی چینی و ژاپنی					
۴- فیلم‌های سینمایی ترکیه					
۵- فیلم‌های سینمایی هندی					
۶- فیلم‌های سینمایی آمریکایی					
۷- فیلم‌های سینمایی روسی و اروپایی					
۸- برنامه‌های آموزشی و درسی					
۹- برنامه‌های موسیقی و آواز ایرانی					
۱۰- برنامه‌های موسیقی و آواز غربی					
۱۱- برنامه‌های موسیقی و آواز ترکی					
۱۲- برنامه‌های موسیقی و آواز هندی					
۱۳- برنامه‌های تخصصی و شغلی					
۱۴- برنامه‌های سیرک و شعبده‌بازی و کمدی					
۱۵- فیلم‌های خاندانی مربوط به اقوام و دوستان					
۱۶- فیلم‌های کارتون و سایر برنامه‌های کودکان					
۱۷- سایر ()					
۱۸- سایر ()					

۳۹- لطفاً فهرست زیر را که شامل انواع فعالیتهای مردم برای استفاده از ویدئو می باشد مطالعه کرده و نظر خودتان را با استفاده از علامت \sqrt یا X در محل مربوطه مشخص فرمایید.

مقوله ها	همیشه	اغلب مواقع	بعضی وقتها	بندرت	هرگز
۱- برنامه ریزی و تصمیم گیری در مورد زمان مشاهده و سایر موارد قبل از تماشای برنامه از طریق ویدئو					
۲- استفاده از نشریات، مجلات یا نظریات دیگران برای انتخاب برنامه ها یا فیلم های مورد نظر					
۳- احساس می کنم هنوز برنامه ها و فیلم های بسیاری هست که دوست دارم ببینم.					
۴- بررسی چند دقیقه از فیلم برای مطمئن شدن از محتوای آن و مناسب بودن آن برای محیط خانواده					
۵- گرفتن یا اجاره کردن نوار ویدئو از افرادی که مطمئنم فیلم های نامناسب برای خانواده به ما نمی دهند					
۶- پرس و جو از مالک فیلم در مورد مناسب بودن محتوای آن برای خانواده					
۷- استفاده از دکمه جلو بردن ویدئو برای حذف صحنه های نامناسب.					
۸- تسخیر کاتال تلویزیون یا خاموش کردن تلویزیون برای حذف برخی صحنه ها					
۹- قطع فیلم و نیمه کاره رها کردن آن					
۱۰- به هنگام مشاهده برخی صحنه ها در حضور دیگران احساس شرم می کنم					
۱۱- بحث با دیگر تماشاگران در مورد موضوع یا برخی صحنه ها به هنگام تماشای برنامه یا فیلم ویدئو					
۱۲- بحث با دیگر تماشاگران در مورد موضوع یا برخی صحنه ها بعد از تمام شدن برنامه یا فیلم ویدئو					
۱۳- بحث با دیگر افراد و دوستان که فیلم را ندیده اند یا در جای دیگر مشاهده کرده اند در مورد موضوع فیلم یا برنامه					
۱۴- آرزو می کنم کاش در اماکن و شهرها و مناظری زندگی می کردم که در برنامه ها و فیلم های ویدئویی دیدم					
۱۵- آرزو می کنم کاش بعضی از وسایل و امکانات و تجهیزات را که در برنامه های ویدئویی دیدم، در اختیار داشتم					
۱۶- سعی می کنم کارهایی را انجام دهم که در برنامه های ویدئویی انجام می دهند					
۱۷- احساس می کنم شیوه زندگی آدمهای موجود در برنامه ها و فیلم های ویدئویی واقعی است و مردم در کشورهای خارج همانگونه زندگی می کنند					
۱۸- آرزو می کنم کاش جای بعضی از شخصیت ها یا افرادی بودم که در برنامه ها و فیلم های ویدئویی دیدم					
۱۹- فکر می کنم آدمهای موجود در برنامه ها و فیلم های ویدئویی خوشبخت تر از من و اطرافیانم هستند					

۳۰- لطفاً فهرست زیر را که شامل انواع فعالیتهای خانواده‌ها برای استفاده جوانان و نوجوانان از دستگاه ویژده می‌باشد، مطالعه کرده و نظر خودتان را با استفاده از علامت $\sqrt{}$ یا x در محل مربوطه مشخص کنید.

مقرله‌ها	همیشه	اغلب مواقع	بعضی وقتها	بندرت	هرگز
۱- دستگاه ویدئو در محلی که دارای قفل است نگهداری می‌شود					
۲- برای استفاده از ویدئو باید اول از والدین اجازه بگیرم					
۳- خانواده‌ام در مورد اینکه من با چه کسانی و چه نوع فیلم‌هایی تماشا می‌کنم حساسیت دارد					
۴- خانواده‌ام در مورد مدت زمانی که صرف تماشای ویدئو می‌کنم حساسیت دارند					
۵- برای خانواده درس خواندن من از تماشای ویدئو مهم‌تر است					
۶- خانواده‌ام به اینکه از چه کسانی فیلم ویدئو اجاره یا قرض کنم کنترل می‌کند					
۷- خانواده‌ام در مورد اینکه چه موقعی از شبانه روز از ویدئو استفاده شود حساسیت دارند					
۸- بزرگترها قبل از بخش فیلم خودشان آنرا بررسی می‌کنند					
۹- والدین در مورد اینکه چند نوع فیلم‌هایی مناسب خانواده می‌باشد با سایر اعضاء خانواده بحث می‌کنند					
۱۰- برخی از فیلم‌ها را قطع و از ادامه آنها جلوگیری می‌کنند					
۱۱- در مورد بدآموزی‌های احتمالی نوجوانان از برخی برنامه‌های ویدئویی حراس دارند					
۱۲- معتقدند که شیوه زندگی آدمهای موجود در برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌های ویدئویی غیر واقعی است					
۱۳- والدینم به شیوه‌های مختلف مرا از دیدن برنامه‌های ویدئویی دلسرد یا حتی منع می‌کنند					

۳۱- در مجموع فکر می‌کنید میزان و حجم کنترلی که خانواده‌تان بر دستگاه ویدئو و نوع و زمان استفاده شما از آن دارد چقدر سختگیرانه است؟

۱- خیلی خیلی سخت‌گیرانه ☐ ۲- خیلی سخت‌گیرانه ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم سخت‌گیرانه ☐ ۵- خیلی کم سخت‌گیرانه ☐

۳۲- در مجموع فکر می‌کنید کنترلی که خانواده‌تان بر دستگاه ویدئو دارد چقدر ضروری و برای شما مفید است؟

۱- خیلی مفید ☐ ۲- مفید ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- مضر ☐ ۵- خیلی مضر ☐

۳۳- در هر حال نظر تان را توضیح دهید و بنویسید چرا فکر می‌کنید کنترل خانواده مفید یا مضر می‌باشد؟

۳۴- پس از چند سال استفاده از ویدئو میزان رضایت خودتان را در مورد موارد زیر ذکر نمایید:

مقرله‌ها	کاملاً راضی	تقریباً راضی	متوسط	ناراضی	کاملاً ناراضی
۱- کیفیت ضبط و تکثیر نوارهای ویدئویی در جامعه					
۲- محتوای فرهنگی برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌های ویدئویی در جامعه					
۳- تعداد برنامه و فیلم‌های موجود در فروشگاههای مجاز (ارشاد)					
۴- تنوع برنامه‌ها و فیلمهای ویدئویی موجود در جامعه					
۵- سازگاری برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌های ویدئویی با فرهنگ جامعه					
۶- کیفیت و کمیت خدمات مربوط به دستگاههای ویدئو					
۷- قیمت نوارهای خام و پر شده					
۸- کمیت برنامه‌های موجود در جامعه					
۹- رشد فرهنگ استفاده از ویدئو در جامعه					
۱۰- سهم برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌های مناسب ایرانی نسبت به کل نوارهای موجود					
۱۱- قیمت اجاره نوارها					
۱۲- وجود فیلمهای سینمایی جدید خارجی					

۳۵- شما معمولاً برنامه‌های ویدئویی را در کجا تماشا می‌کنید؟

۱- منزل خودمان ☐ ۲- منزل دوستان و همکلاسیها ☐ ۳- منزل همسایه‌ها ☐ ۴- منزل اقوام و خویشان ☐ ۵- جاهای دیگر ☐

۳۶- معمولاً کدامیک از ترکیبهای زیر از افراد خانواده‌تان به هنگام تماشای برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌های ویدئویی در منزل خودتان بوجود می‌آید؟
لطفاً حداکثر دو مورد را به ترتیب و با شماره‌های ۱ و ۲ مشخص کنید.

۱- همه خانواده با هم ☐ ۲- فرزندان بدون حضور پدر و مادر ☐ ۳- فرزندان و مادر بدون حضور پدر ☐
۴- فرزندان و پدر بدون حضور مادر ☐ ۵- پدر و مادر با هم بدون حضور فرزندان ☐

*** بخش چهارم *** (ویژه پاسخگویان فاقد دستگاه ویدئو) ***

۱- شما با وجود آنکه در منزلتان در حال حاضر ویدئو ندارید و در گذشته نیز هرگز به مدت بیش از یکسال در منزلتان ویدئو نداشته‌اید، در حال حاضر معمولاً چند بار در ماه در محل‌های مختلف از برنامه‌های ویدئویی استفاده می‌کنید؟

۱- همیشه ☐ ۲- اغلب روزها ☐ ۳- بیشتر روزها ☐ ۴- بعضی روزها ☐ ۵- بندرت یا هرگز ☐

۲- معمولاً این برنامه‌های ویدئویی را در چه محل‌هایی می‌بینید؟

۱- منزل اقوام ☐ ۲- منزل دوستان ☐ ۳- منزل همسایه‌ها ☐ ۴- مدرسه یا مسجد ☐ ۵- سایر ☐

۳- علل اصلی عدم مالکیت ویدئو را چه می‌دانید؟ لطفاً حداکثر ۲ مورد با شماره‌های ۱ و ۲ ذکر کنید.

۱- کمبود وقت و غیراحتمال تحصیل من و خواهران و برادرانم ☐ ۲- گرانی دستگاه ☐

۳- عدم امکان یا مشکل بودن یافتن برنامه‌های مورد نظر ☐ ۴- مخالفت والدینم با اثرات اخلاقی و رفتاری سوء ویدئو ☐

۵- عدم توافق اعضای خانواده در مورد برنامه‌های مناسب و مطلوب ☐ ۶- سستی بودن خانواده‌ام ☐

۷- حرام بودن نسبی ویدئو ☐ ۸- سایر (ذکر کنید:) ☐

*** بخش پنجم *** (ویژه کلیه پاسخگویان) ***

۱- شدت چقدر با هر یک از عبارات زیر موافقت می‌کنید؟ لطفاً نظرتان را با علامت ✓ یا X مشخص فرمایید.

مقوله‌ها	کاملاً موافق	تقریباً موافق	متوسط	تقریباً مخالف	کاملاً مخالف
۱- ویدئو مدت زمانی را که افراد خانواده با هم بسر می‌برند بیشتر می‌کند					
۲- ویدئو وسیله مناسبی برای سرگرمی و گذران اوقات فراغت است					
۳- اغلب برنامه‌های موجود ویدئویی مناسب برای خانواده‌ها نیستند					
۴- ویدئو باعث ایجاد دلخوری و دعوا بین اعضای خانواده‌ها می‌شود					
۵- بیشتر خانواده‌ها در مورد نوع برنامه‌هایی که فرزندانیشان تماشا می‌کنند حساسیت دارند					
۶- ویدئو امکان دیدن برنامه‌هایی را فراهم می‌کند که از طریق تلویزیون و سینما امکان دیدن آنها وجود ندارد					
۷- ویدئو نوع نگرش مردم نسبت به زندگی و جامعه را تغییر می‌دهد					
۸- ویدئو میزان آگاهی مردم نسبت به سایر کشورها و فرهنگ‌ها را افزایش می‌دهد					
۹- ویدئو رفتار نوجوانان و جوانان در محیط خانه و مدرسه را تغییر می‌دهد					
۱۰- ویدئو کیفیت و وضع تحصیل نوجوانان را پایین می‌آورد					

۲- شما در مجموع و با در نظر گرفتن تمام پی‌آمدهای احتمالی استفاده از ویدئو، این تکنولوژی را چقدر مفید یا مضر می‌دانید؟

۱- خیلی مضر ☐ ۲- مضر ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- مفید ☐ ۵- خیلی مفید ☐

۳- به نظر شما ویدئوچه اثراتی بر طرز تلقی مردم از جامعه، زندگی و فرهنگ دارد؟ لطفاً نظراتان را توضیح دهید.

۴- ویدئوچه اثرات ناخوشایندی می‌تواند بر ذهن و رفتار نوجوانان و جوانان داشته باشد؟ چگونه می‌توان این اثرات ناخوشایند را تقلیل داد؟

۵- به نظر شما علیرغم تمام مشکلات قانونی و فرهنگی موجود، چقدر مردم می‌توانند در برنامه یا فیلم ویدئویی را که بخواهند، بدست آورده تماشا کنند؟

۱- خیلی زیاد ☐ ۲- زیاد ☐ ۳- متوسط ☐ ۴- کم ☐ ۵- خیلی کم ☐

۶- با در نظر گرفتن محتوای برنامه‌ها و فیلم‌های ویدئویی، چه سوژه‌ها، برنامه‌ها، صحنه‌ها و فیلم‌هایی را برای نوجوانان و جوانان نامناسب و مضر می‌دانید؟ لطفاً نظراتان را توضیح دهید.

۷- برخی از مردم اعتقاد دارند که گسترش ویدئو در جامعه عمدتاً ناشی از مشکلات و نارسایی‌های مربوط به تلویزیون و سینماهای کشور می‌باشد، لطفاً بنویسید چقدر با این عقیده موافقت و در صورت موافقت، ایجاد چه نوع تغییراتی را در برنامه‌های تلویزیون و سینما ضروری می‌دانید؟

دانش‌آموز عزیز، خواهر و برادر گرامی،

در پایان از همکاری شما صمیمانه قدردانی نموده و خواهشمندم در تکمیل پرسشنامه ب‌توسط والدین محترمتان نیز براساس تذکرات تقدیم شده، کمال همکاری را داشته باشید.

و من... التوفیق و علیه التکلان
مهدی مستظر قائم

Appendix B:

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

List of 30 Demographic & Educational Indices

A) List of 18 Demographic Indices:

- 1) population density (persons per square kilometre),
- 2) birth rate (children under 1 year/women 15-45 years),
- 3) average age of population,
- 4) ratio of children (under 15) to total population,
- 5) employment rate,
- 6) ratio of single female employment to the number of housewives,
- 7) ratio of single female education to the number of housewives,
- 8) ratio of population over 65 to total population,
- 9) ratio of girl's education continuity (number of student girls 15-19 old/total girls 15-19),
- 10) ration of families without even one illiterate to families without even one literate,
- 11) ratio of families with 8 or more members,
- 12) ratio of population born abroad to total population,
- 13) ratio of population born in villages to total population,
- 14) literacy rate (total literate population over 5/total population),
- 15) rate of educational coverage (student population 10-15/total population 10-15),
- 16) average family size,
- 17) ratio of girls' marriage (married girls between 15-24/total number of girls 15-25),
- 18) ratio of illiterate migrant to whole migrant in the past five year.

B) List of 12 Educational Indices:

- 1) ratio of number of students in second daily shift of primary schools to total primary school students,
- 2) ratio of students in 'non-profitable' (private) primary schools to total primary school students,
- 3) ratio of girl students in 'non-profitable' (private) primary schools to total students of 'non-profitable' (private) primary schools,

- 4) ratio of number of students in second daily shift of secondary schools to total secondary school students,
- 5) ratio of students in 'non-profitable' (private) secondary schools to total secondary school students,
- 6) ratio of girl students in 'non-profitable' (private) secondary schools to total students of 'non-profitable' (private) secondary schools,
- 7) ratio of number of students in second daily shift of high schools to total high school students,
- 8) ratio of students in 'non-profitable' (private) high schools to total high school students,
- 9) ratio of girl students in 'non-profitable' (private) high schools to total students of 'non-profitable' (private) high schools,
- 10) ratio of continuity of education from secondary to high school,
- 11) ratio of continuity of education from primary to secondary school,
- 12) ratio of student density per schools.

Exemplar Area Table of Quotas

Table- Sample Student of Area 3 by Type of School, Grade & Sex

	1	2	3	4	Total
<u>Public Schools:</u>					
girls	19	17	21	17	74
boys	13	12	14	13	52
<u>Private Schools:</u>					
girls	3	4	4	3	14
boys	7	6	8	7	28
Total	42	39	47	40	168

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