

Provide a Model for Policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (Case study: IRIB)

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Abstract

Because of important role of media in shaping public opinion in modern societies, it seems necessary to develop long-term policies in order to steer the media towards a great level. Despite its importance, there have been no effort for shaping the media policy, and most publications just consist of explanation of governments' performance in media field. In the present study, attempts were to achieve the desired model for policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) [1] by explanation the necessity and challenges in front of this media. We use literature to find the factors affecting the media policy also achieve lots of information during the interview process. The research method used in this study is the data-oriented theory (grounded theory) which has been made through profound interviews with 12 experts in the field of media as well as senior managers of IRIB and academic experts. The sampling has been carried out through the Snowball method and the interviews' results have been put in the paradigm model format after the coding phase and then the optimal policy-making model has been shaped for IRIB.

Keywords: Media; Policy-making; Media policy process; Media policy model

Introduction

The media organizations environments have experienced profound and complicated changes in recent decades. An important part of this transformation is due to the emergence of new information technologies and changes in living and subjective conditions of audience which has added the complication and turbulence of these organizations' environments. Since media organizations operate in a complicated and changeable environment, they require a road map to manage this environment and react against its sudden changes properly.

The policy-making in any field reflects the values of a society and should be developed in. The policy-making in the media is no exception and needs to follow the patterns and values dominant in the society. The policy-making process in the media is an attempt to achieve political, cultural and social goals in which the society's values and political factors are necessarily involved and the desired pattern is not achievable in this field unless these factors are considered in each society [2].

IRIB as the largest media in the country and the only entity licensed to broadcast Radio and Television media in Iran requires efficient strategies and policies to be able to retain its position between other media and to improve it in the future – given the changes and complications in the environment.

IRIB is under supervision of the supreme leader in terms of governance and its president has full authority to manage the organization. The conducted investigations show that in recent years, the policy-making process in this media organization has followed no specific policy and therefore, we cannot consider a specific policy-making process for it. This lack of proper policy and also the weaknesses viewed in relation to the macro policies in the organization, directed this research to study the policy-making process in this organization.

Literature Review

The research theoretical basics review the research literature about the necessity of media policy-making, the challenges ahead and the

policy-making models in media.

Necessity of media policy

The policy-making of communication and information technologies is necessary for governments because of multiple reasons. First, the communication systems have an important and effective role in political processes. Second, the international information technologies and communication have an impact on the nations' social and cultural issues. The third reason for why media policy-making is important for the governments is complete inseparability between the real and virtual spaces [3]. Freedman [2] in response to the question of "why do we need policy-making in the media?" considers the media an important economical factor in western societies and introduces the media as an important factor of social reproduction which is able to play an important role in the social and cultural processes.

UNESCO (1972) explains the media policy-making in different countries as follows: each state has a policy for the media. Sometimes, the policy-makings are scattered and inexplicit rather than reflected as a coordinated set. The media policy-making may be very general and only address the goals and principals or it may define the details as well and be mandatory for the media. This policy-making may have multiple levels in terms of comprehensiveness and development method [4].

Media policy model

Freedman [2], presents two policy-making models each one of

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which are adopted from two Pluralism and neo-liberalism schools and he also shows that how fundamental values of the two schools have affected the media policy-making structure. His approach is critical and he criticizes both Pluralism and neo-liberalism schools on the media policy.

From damages of the Pluralism viewpoint, Freedman argues that despite the increase of stakeholders and apparent increase in referral of the policy-making issues to the stockholders, there is a centrality in policy-making for media in this model. Some of the core values of the policy-making model in the Pluralism school include: keeping multiple players in the policy-making field, creating a competitive open space and preserving the interests of all stakeholder groups in the society in the policy-making process. But in fact, the policy-makers act within borders of a specific ideology that is consistent with their interests. The policy-making case that Freedman has presented in this book, confirms the way the media policy-making is consistent with opinions and interests of the major players in the politics and economy fields.

The next model that Freedman introduces is the media policy model which was designed based on the Neo-liberal school principles. The Neo-liberal school is opposed to the government's role in the media market decision-making and believes that turning to the free market is essential. Therefore, the economical players owning most big media that have a close relationship with the governments in USA and England (two countries studied by Freedman), have a major role in the media policy and legislation.

The next model which will be further shown [Figure 1], has designed the main elements of the media policy-making based on existing goals and values in the society [5].

This model is applicable in countries where the media policy is performed by the government. In this model, the public interests are

the general goals which are followed in a country and are linked to the public interests. In order to separate public interests different areas, this area will be divided into smaller scopes such as political interests, social interests and economic interests.

The values associated with each of these goals are specified in the next part of the model. The democracy and freedom of communication are the main values in the political interest area or the social and cultural values are the main values of the social interests and also, the increase in the economic interests is also considered one of the fundamental values of the economic interests. The next section shows how different contents are published through different media channels such as publication industry, Radio and Television broadcasting or telecommunication industry. In bottom part of the model, it has been shown that how the media policy-making and legislation in different areas have an impact on other processes.

Talking about media policy-making without discussing the type and the extent of government intervention will not be accurate. Smith [6] introduced a new political approach in this context that has changed the policy-making models in England including the increased number of people involved in media policy-making and also opening up new fields in policy-making. He has a historical review of media policy-making in England and shows how this policy-making was made by the government and under its direct supervision previously while today there is not such a control [7]. Smith writes, due to changes in technology, in particular, direct Radio and Television broadcast satellites, Europe TV policy-making which before was made by the government, Now it appears to have less government control. In fact, Smith's structured and scientific justification offers a watchful and critical analysis about media policy-making in the United Kingdom. Smith's approach is less ideological and analyzes the media policy-making mostly with regard to complexities of decision-making and a

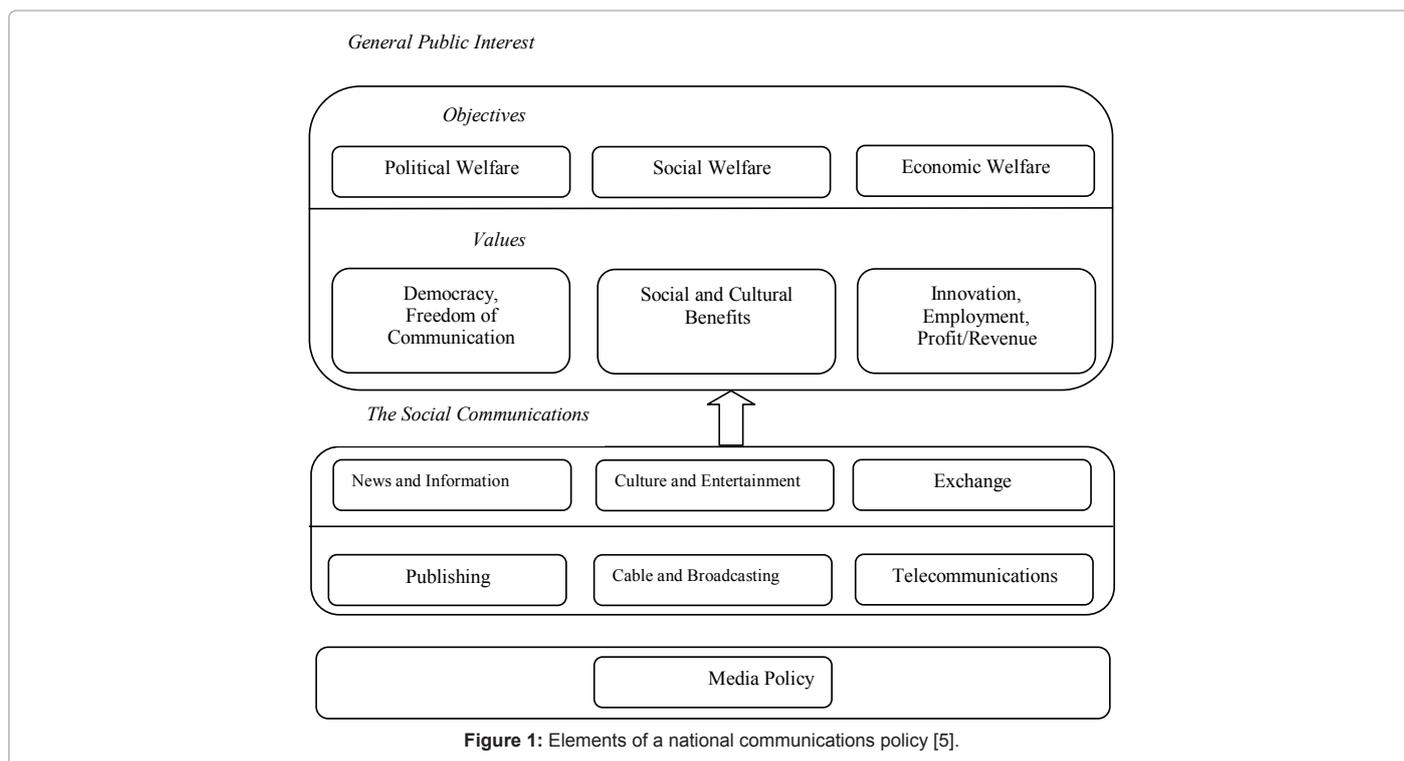


Figure 1: Elements of a national communications policy [5].

wide variety of policy-makers and its unpredictable results.

McQuail [8] defines the media policy as a project in which the government and the field administrators legislate for the media. Sometimes this legislation is national and sometimes international. The media policy points to the governmental policy-making and presence of guarantee tools that have been created for controlling the media markets. The regulatory tools in the pattern provided by the McQuail include:

- Public ownership
- Subsidies
- licensing powers
- content rules
- trade barriers
- trade agreement

This policy-making model by McQuail has two key challenges. First, it does not consider the informal processes and gives a little credit to other players except the government. Second, it assumes the policy-making area to be limited. In support for this analysis, Barman [9] explains how the hidden policy-making has affected media situation in recent years. He believes that we must look to the hidden political lobbies rather than look to the overt role of governments.

The next model which is remarkable for the media policy-making is provided by Olmsted [10]. He identifies the external environment and internal environment of media organizations as the two pillars of the competitive environment in each media company.

New paradigm of policy

As Abramson [11] argues, the emergence of the internet and digital mass media indicate the end of history of media policymaking. This agreement on the reduction of media policymaking relies mostly on policymaking for radio and television broadcasting. However, it can be claimed that even if such a reduction exists, the policymaking will not be terminated, but a new form of media policymaking will be shaped which constitutes a big change in the field.

According to Montgomery [12] the media in general are increasingly creating a range in which it is impossible to make policy. Specially, there are convergent trends which make it more difficult to maintain the traditional distinction between the various media sections in terms of policymaking and supervision. Media policymaking is a primary factor in shaping the media direction, and also is an outlook for the media in shaping the human environment. According to plenty of researchers, the governments are and would be the major players in developing and implementing media policies. In this regard, the countries' laws operate as a vehicle to provide more governmental supervision. Latency factors, including lobbying, political and economic power of the media have an effective role in media policy process [13].

According to Hemerijck [1] the values are the essential and complementary elements in new media paradigm. This approach creates a grouping to carry out better analysis which permits us to determine the future challenges in terms of various functions of the Media. The media policymaking in the new paradigm is closely related to the state's behavior, social agencies, policy makers, and media specialists. However, in these days the controlling power of the state

on the media policymaking is decreasing and media policy process more reliant on information obtained from the research. Increasing confidence to policy makers for research results has occurred [14]. A historical review of media policy in the Britain shows that how these policies by the government made and how now this control is lost [6].

Methodology

Grounded theory is an interpretive approach which includes a collection of procedures used for systematically gathering and analyzing the data obtained by doing research, in order to investigate and study a phenomenon to propose an inductive theory [15]. This approach is a research method that seeks for generating a theory, and is grounded in conceptual data which are gathered and analyzed systematically. The theory's methodology allows the researcher to form the theoretical foundation from the general features of an issue grounded in observations or experimental data. The difference between grounded theorization development and other approaches is its specific technique in terms of theory development. In grounded theorization there should be a mutual influence between the data collection and data analysis.

This study employs a qualitative approach and applies grounded theory as research method. Grounded theory is a qualitative study used to generate a theory by using a data set. This theory develops a process, action, or interaction at a broad level. In this method, the research never begins with a theory which looks for data to confirm itself. In contrast, it begins with a study period during which there is enough time for relevant and appropriate data to be revealed [16].

Considering the research subject, the statistical population of the current study includes instructors and specialists in the field of media, as well as the senior managers of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) who are selected through utilizing chain-referral method. Sampling method is snowballing technique (chain-referral). In snowball sampling, the samples not only provide information about them but also give referrals to other samples in relevant population [17]. This method starts with a primary interview most often with a key respondent, and then he/she is asked to introduce friends, relatives, or others who are potentially appropriate for interviewing. Data collection method is an in-depth interview. 12 people were interviewed in this research [2]. Duplicated information was seen after the eighth interview, but the interview continued up to twelfth sample; however, the data were exactly similar and saturated after the tenth interview [3]. The interview started with questions related to "the essential components of policymaking patterns in Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organization" (open-ended interview) and continued with the remaining questions which were constructed according to the interviewee's responses. The interviews were all recorded and reviewed several times in order to extract the key points [4].

First step: Open codification

Open codification stages include:

1. **Analysis and codification:** In this stage, sampling should be done wide enough to enable researcher to discover concepts openly. In fact, the researcher should focus on codification of any interesting events. Plenty of codes might be extracted from an interview (text), but while the data are reviewed constantly, the new codes are counted and the final codes are determined.

2. **Discovery of categories:** In this stage, called categorization (theme developing), the concepts are categorized based on the

relationship they have with relevant issues. The way we label the categories are more abstract than the concepts that form the category. Categories are highly conceptual; because, they can embrace concepts along their axes. The labels are mostly chosen by the researcher and it was attempted to select them in most accordance with the implying data. The phrases or words expressed by the participants in the study (by interviewees) are also of the reasons in label selection, which would likely to be applied by the researcher.

3. Description of categories according to their properties: In order to have more clear categories, the next step addresses their properties.

4. Open codification table: It includes two sections: the table of primary codes extracted from interviews and the table of categories extracted from concepts along with their secondary codes.

Primary codification: In this stage, all key points obtained from interviews are titled. Then, all the titles are put in following tables [Table 1]. A sample of primary code mined from one of the interviews is presented in following table.

Secondary codification and issues forming: During the next stage, primary codes are turned into secondary codes because of their large numbers, and fall into similar categories. Several secondary codes are turned into a conceptual code. In following table [Table 2], for instance, the open codification results are presented based on secondary codes, conceptual codes, and issues.

Main cases forming: during the next stage, Issues are turned into main classes because of fall into similar categories. In following table [Table 3], for instance, the issues results main classes.

Primary codification(first interview)	
1	The law is face with serious challenges, the law should be revised.
2	Leadership Determine macro policies of IRIB
3	The main input in the policymaking process of IRIB com from the leader
4	Mechanism of communication between the organization and leadership in the policy is not clear.
5	By law, the Council has been monitoring the organization.
6	Council representative don't has executive powers.
7	Mechanism should be designed to reach the elites demands.
8	Media should produce what audience need.
9	Audience tastes will change over time.
10	Audience access to information systems is now widespread.
11	Demands of audience should be As input data of policy-making process.
12	Intellectual leaders in shaping public opinion and persuasion are effective.
13	The observation of the Competitors is not deep.
14	Case has been observed continuously for organizing observations.
15	Knowing Mental context of what competitors are producing for the media is necessary.
16	The problem is finding a consistent opinion poll.
17	Plurality of input in policy-making process should be done.
18	For a comprehensive view, your input in media policy must be different.
19	Monitor the enforcement of the law by media should be done by the Cultural Commission.

Table 1: Primary codification.

Issues	Conceptual code	Secondary code	Abundance
Understand the necessity for policy	correction policy process	This media organization need to clear policy There is no formulation of policy IRIB need media policy mechanism There is no pattern in this organization for policy	16
	Understand the need for policy process	Necessary to understand media policy Diversity in the policy process Ambiguity in the roles of policy	5
	Pathology of existing policy process	The model of organization s policy need to correction There is no central coherence in policy of IRIB There is missing in chain of media policy Need for shaping policy system	10
	Content policy	Most policy is message in media Most Policy announced by leader is content policy Almost all policies serve content in media policy	6
Procedural legitimacy	Lack of process legitimacy	There is no process legitimacy in the media policy IRIB don't have formal policy process	6
	Problems of person oriented policies	Performance of organization is completely depended to manager Influence of dependent manager to the policy	8
Interaction of media and university	Necessity of interact between media and university	Universities are far away from the policy process Academics should be entered in theatrical field of policy IRIB should consult with professionals in university for policy making University is far from the executive process in IRIB	26
	Inefficiency in the research that is done in university	More than before, Interaction with academic institution Policies are not data driven in IRIB Issues organized by expert groups	19

Table2: Issues, conceptual code and Secondary code.

Second step: Axial codification

Axial codification is the second stage of analysis in grounded theory. This stage aims to relate generated categories to each other (in open codification stage). This is done based on paradigm model, and helps theorists to perform the theory process easily [Figure 2]. The

foundation of making relationship in axial codification is based on the expansion of one of the categories.

Third step: Theorization stage (Selective codification)

As mentioned before, the aim of grounded theory is to generate theory and not just to describe the phenomenon. In order to turn the

Main classes	Issues
designing competitive thinking mechanisms	Attracting audience Competitive thinking Long-term approach Interaction with stakeholders
political mechanisms	Avoiding politicization Interaction with macro-policies of country Interaction with the supreme Council of Cultural Revolution
legal mechanisms	Reforming the regulations The essentiality of relationship between the IRIB and the Islamic Consultative Assembly
regulatory mechanisms	Highlighting the role of the regulatory council Promoting supervision system
Planning research and professional mechanisms	Interaction between the Media and the University Understanding the need for specialists
management mechanisms	The level of authority of middle managers One-dimensional views Expansion of the range of policy makers The highlighted role of the head of the organization
Cultural mechanisms	Designing cultural mechanisms Supreme Leader's policies Media and the values Interaction between the IRIB and IRIB's general values
designing efficient policies	Procedural legitimacy Conceptualization of the necessity of policymaking Preparing the organization for setting up policymaking process Redesigning the executive procedures

Table 3: Main classes.

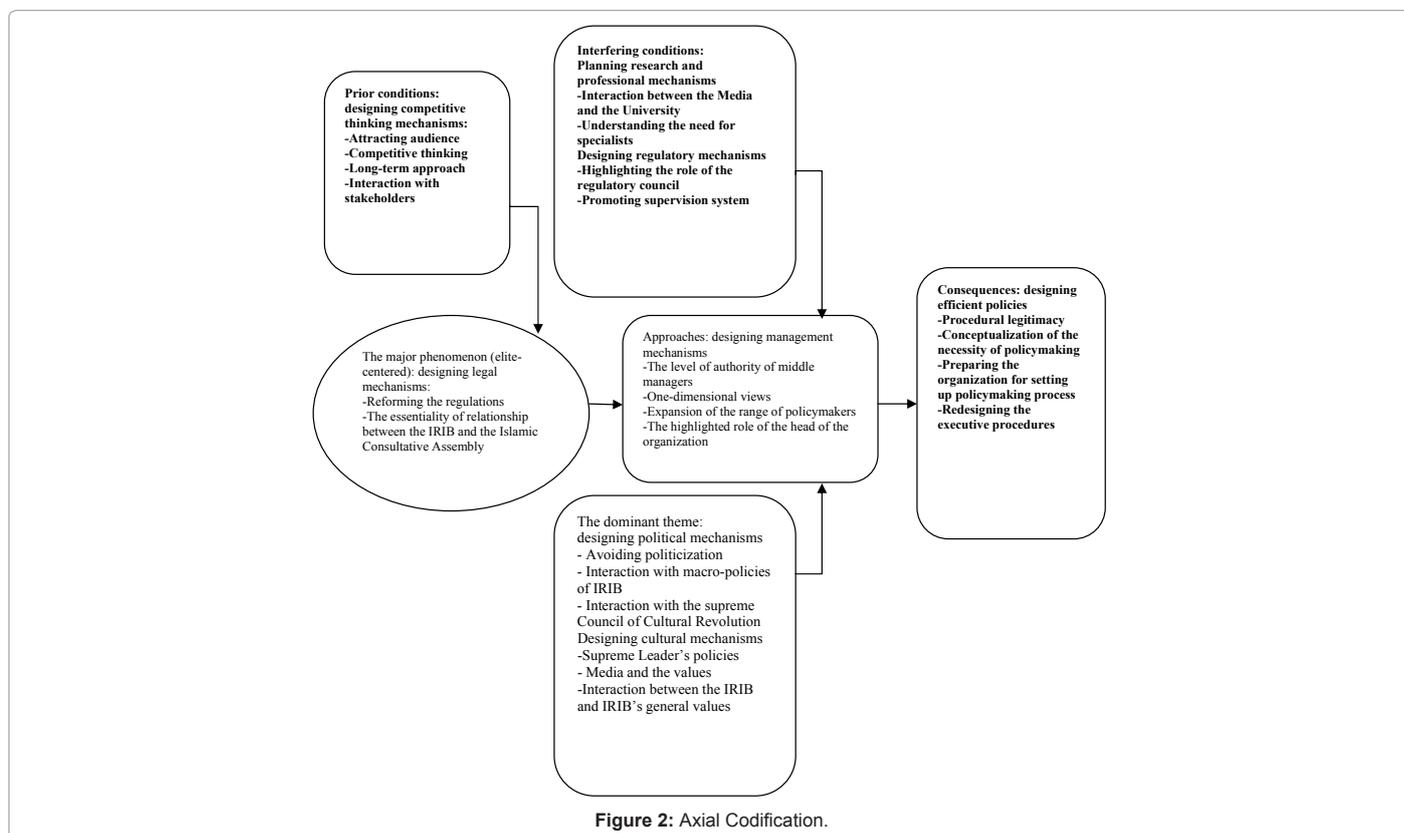


Figure 2: Axial Codification.

analyses into theory, the categories should be persistently related to each other. Selective codification is based on the results of (two preceding stages of codification) the main stage of the theory. That is, selective codification systematically relates core category to other categories, develops those relationships into a single storyline, and modifies those categories which need more improvement and development. In this stage, the researchers, based on their understanding of the context or paradigm model, develops a storyline or modifies the paradigm model and draws the final theory.

Results

The model obtained in this study, to be shown in following sections, provides mechanisms which will shape the efficient policies of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organization [Figure 3].

In following table [Table 4], researchers compare the elements of research's model with literature.

Conclusion

As shown in the above model, the formation of competitive thinking at the higher managerial levels of IRIB Organization would result in understanding of the need for policymaking process by the managers at the higher levels of the IRIB organization. This should be taken into consideration that without providing appropriate mechanism for competitive thoughts in the IRIB organization, the management would not be able to develop policies that are consistent with competitive environment shaped for the media. In addition, it is essential that legal mechanisms provide necessary requirements for shaping policymaking process in the IRIB organization. The provisions of the IRIB organization have not been undergone any changes since 1981; therefore, the organization is faced with serious challenges in terms of rules. The improvement in the regulations will result in modification in managerial mechanisms of the IRIB organization. The head of the

IRIB organization, having special authorities, has unlimited power and is not accountable to other cultural agencies of the country, including Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. Moderating the authorities of the head of the IRIB organization in order to have him accountable to other agencies would be a positive step in effective implementation of macro-policies of the country. Modification of regulatory mechanisms would be an influential factor in efficient implementation of policies. Inter-organizational monitoring and evaluation systems can operate more independently if being excluded from the planning deputy coverage. Moreover, by improving the regulations related to the authorities of regulatory council, this council would leave its superficial status, and so more effective external supervisions would be provided. Utilization of the data obtained from researches conducted inside and outside of the IRIB organization will result in shaping data driven policies that make the process more rational. As the IRIB organization has more sensitive and influential role in the society, in comparison with other organizations, different political groups attempt to penetrate into it. Therefore, the modification in political mechanisms influencing the IRIB organization is one of the essential requirements for making modification to executive and management structures of the IRIB organization. Indexing policies announced by the supreme leader will cause cultural and moral policies to be organized and executed more properly. In this way, the IRIB will achieve its objective which is becoming a media that propagates values of Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, the road to achieve efficient policies in the IRIB organization will be paved.

Based on this model, it is required that IRIB considers the following contents of this research:

- In the first place, the Islamic Consultative Assembly is required to modify and review the traditional rules followed by the IRIB. Developing new regulation in which independent status and authorities of Regulatory Council are recognized

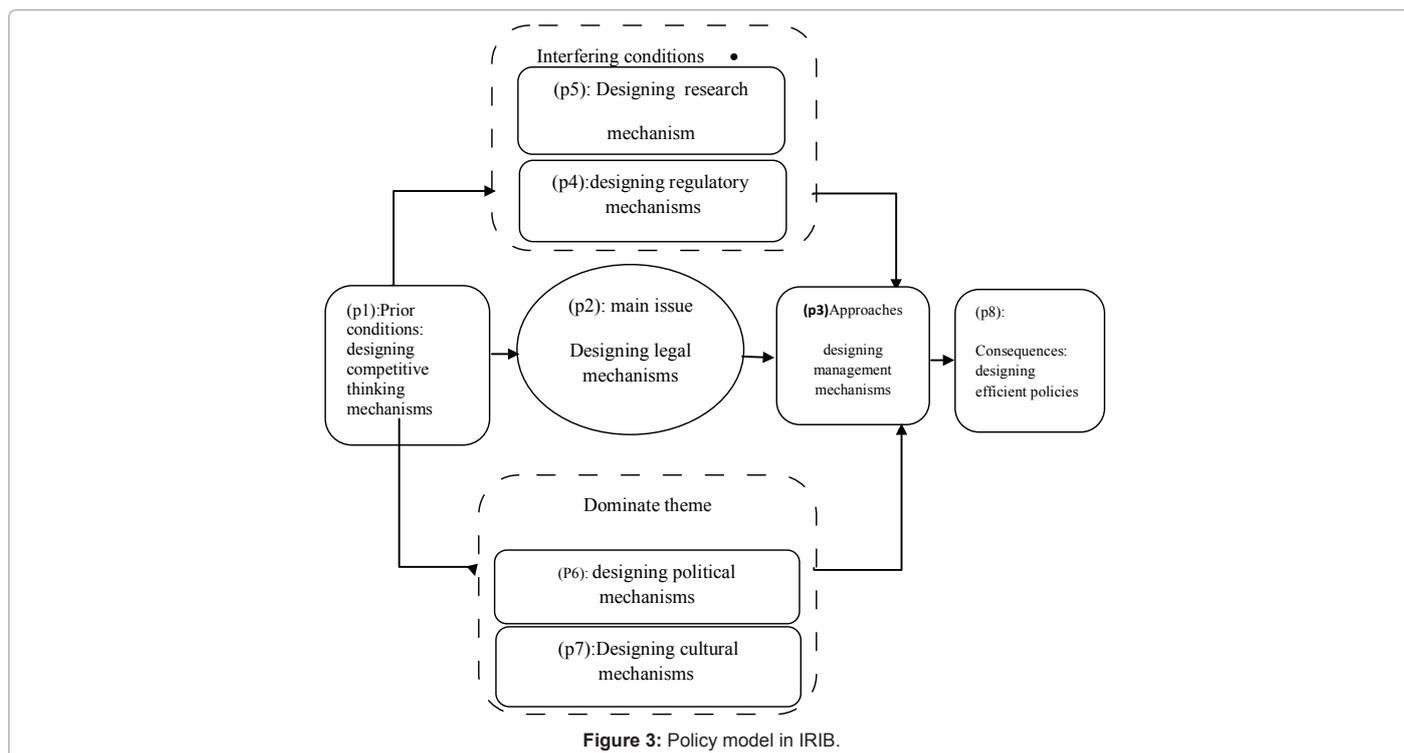


Figure 3: Policy model in IRIB.

Elements of policy model in IRIB	Literature
Prior conditions: designing competitive thinking mechanisms - Attracting audience - Competitive thinking - Long-term approach - Interaction with stakeholders	Media are in competitive environment [2] Decreasing trend of policy transparency it has been in these years (Mac chancy:2004)
The major phenomenon (elite-centered): designing legal mechanisms: - Reforming the regulations - The essentiality of relationship between the IRIB and the Islamic Consultative Assembly	Decreasing Legislation in field of media policy [5] The government sector in the field of legislation is very active[18] Discussion about media policy without discussion about intervention of government is not true [19]
The dominant theme: designing political mechanisms - Avoiding politicization - Interaction with macro-policies of IRIB - Interaction with the supreme Council of Cultural Revolution Designing cultural mechanisms - Supreme Leader's policies - Media and the values - Interaction between the IRIB and IRIB's general values	Political and cultural goals are very important in media policy [2] Ideological element in media policy process is important [7] Political bias play main role in media policy process [9] Ideological schools are effective in policy making for media (peck and tickle,2002).
Interfering conditions: Planning research and professional mechanisms - Interaction between the Media and the University - Understanding the need for specialists Designing regulatory mechanisms - Highlighting the role of the regulatory council - Promoting supervision system	Government are active to monitoring media [20] Media policy process increasingly use research [14] Emerging use of scientific research in media policy [12]
Approaches: designing management mechanisms - The level of authority of middle managers - One-dimensional views - Expansion of the range of policy makers - The highlighted role of the head of the organization	Governance in media is by government [21] Importance of management in media [22]
Consequences: designing efficient policies - Procedural legitimacy - Conceptualization of the necessity of policymaking - Preparing the organization for setting up policymaking process - Redesigning the executive procedures	Policy making in information and communication and [3]system is necessary as economic factor policy in media is essential[2]

Table4: Comparison of model elements with literature.

would be a significant step to develop efficient policies in the IRIB organization (Based on conceptual codes: the role of regulations at the core of policymaking, lack of transparency of the regulations of the organization, developing a regulation to establish a policy council.)

- In order to shape an efficient and effective system, the authorities of regulatory council should be defined transparently. The supervision should get out of its mere information provider shape, and regulatory council should be granted legal authority to pursue the organization's deviations from policies (regarding conceptual codes: regulatory mechanisms of regulatory council, the essentiality of transparent regulations which determine the authority of regulatory council, enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems, monitoring the execution of policies, the essentiality of independent monitoring and evaluation center, allocating budget for a regulatory process.)
- Person-centered policymaking in organization should be eliminated. The policies should be made beyond the level of IRIB via external proficient individuals and agencies (based on conceptual codes: controlling unlimited powers of the head of the organization, expanding the range of policy makers, exploiting external specialists in policy council, influence of management changes on implementation of policies, influence of the head's characteristics.)
- The planning and evaluation deputy of the organization turns

the policies determined by the supreme leader into planning propositions, and sets indexes to them. A mechanism should be proposed, based on those indexes, to identify how many of policies have been accomplished and how many of them have not been carried out, per year (based on conceptual codes: macro-policies through the Leader, mechanisms for implementation of the Leader's policies, Leader though room organization, the essentiality of creating regulatory mechanism by leader.)

- Political mechanisms governing the organization should be made transparent via exercising strict external supervisions to prevent it from looking at the current issues and tendencies of the society unilaterally. The management attempts to absorb a broad range of political tendencies to the National Media (based on conceptual codes: the necessity for interaction with political pressures, the permeability of policymaking process, politicization of policy makers, avoiding one-dimensional views.)
- Council of deputies of the organization should develop the executive policies, and leave the macro-policies to be made by policy council. As the members of policy council are mostly from outside of the organization, they would have wider views on the environment of the IRIB, and so it is better to entrust the development of the more abstract policies to this council, and of the executive policies to the council of deputies.

- The mechanism required for scholars to attend in the policy council should be provided by the Training and Research Deputy of Organization (the policies should be based on the data). The Training and Research Deputy should pursue a more proactive approach and deliver more political propositions to Deputy Council to be set (based on conceptual codes: understanding the necessity to exploit external specialists, employing researches' findings in policymaking process.)

The policies of the organization should be made in accordance with the macro-policies of Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. Considering that the IRIB is known as a cultural agency, the development of policies of the organization should comply with the policies of Supreme Council in order to achieve integrated cultural policies in the country (based on conceptual codes: the essentiality of institutional relationships with the Supreme Council, compliance of the organization's policies with the country's general policies, complying the Isla.

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Notes

1. Governmental media in Iran
2. Personal interview with a senior managers of IRIB and media experts
3. Interviews takes time more than 3 month because managers did not have enough time to interview
4. Thanks of university of Tehran for financial assistance in conducting this study

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