The Situation of Foreign Satellite TV Channels[1] in Iran: A Research in Ardabil Province

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Abstract

Iran is a multi-ethnic society with a variety of cultures and languages, but Iranian radio and television are state-owned, and their national networks broadcast all programs in Persian which is a limitation within a diverse society. This paper discusses the popularity of satellite TV viewing among Azerbaijani Iranians in the north-western province of Ardabil. The Ardabil region shares borders with Turkey and the former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan and audiences view satellite broadcasts from these countries. The purpose of this paper is to identify the primary reasons for the use of Turkish and Azerbaijani TV channels by the people of Ardebil. It is hypothesized that Ardabil audience preferences are based on the common culture and language between Turkey, Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran's Azerbaijan region. A survey conducted by the author indicates that 68% of owners point their satellite dishes toward the Turkish satellite; more than 94% of the viewers with satellite TV choose Turkey and Azerbaijani channels; and 57% of them spend more than three hours per day watching these programs. Nearly 70% of the viewers said that if a Turkish channel was established in Iran, they would watch. In addition, 65% declared that common cultural ties influence their choice of channels.

INTRODUCTION

Iran is a country famous for its diverse ethnic communities, most of who live in border provinces and share ethnic and linguistic ties with Iran's neighboring countries. In spite of this language and racial diversity, the Shiite religion and Persian language are endorsed by the state and have become powerful cultural forces that officially unite all Iranians. The reason for the use of Persian language at the exclusion of other languages on Iranian radio and television is that the language and religion are synonymous with national unity (Mohsenianrad, 2004, pp.19-26).

This is not the case in many other multi-ethnic developing countries. For example, Indians speak 15 identified official languages including: Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati, Telegu, Tamil and so on (Ranga, 2002, p.315). According to Indian law everyone has the right to choose any one of these languages for his/her official or educational activities. Every citizen is allowed to present his/her petition before the court in any official language (Janet, 1995, pp.12-15). Some developed countries also have several official languages. Switzerland has four official languages including French, Italian, German and Romansh, which is spoken by a relativity small number of the Swiss citizens. These countries successfully manage the diverse language requirements of their populations.

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[1] Thanks to having a common language and culture between Turkey, Azerbaijan Republic and Ardabil province people as a part of Iran's Azerbaijan religion, the paper tend to search Ardabilian people about Turkey and Azerbaijan TV channels. Also in some researches in Ardabil, there is more than 70 percent tendency to watch the mentioned countries channels.

1. SATELLITE CHANNELS IN ARDABIL

Iranian Azerbaijanis are passionately interested in satellite TV from abroad for a variety of reasons: cultural and linguistic preferences and interests (Ghaffarzadegan, 2001); easier access to scientific and recreational channels; limited variety in Iranian TV programs (Nabaei, 2000); Iran radio and television station managers' disregard for the interests and preferences of the audiences; and censorship of local and global news by Iranian television (Panabadi, 1996).

While these reasons have been given for interest in satellite TV from abroad, researchers have not been able to conduct direct investigations into the reasons why the public in Ardabil have turned away from Iranian television. The reticence has been explained as apprehension about responding to questionnaires and concern about being identified as a satellite dish owner, which is not allowed in Iran. Researchers have therefore had to use indirect questions about the entertainment value of satellite TV programs to measure the public's preferences.

Approximately 300 satellite channels broadcast in Turkish language and all of them are available in Ardabil. Some 200 channels are based in Turkey, most of them private. The rest include 7 channels based in the Republic of Azerbaijan; 2 based in Cyprus; and 3 based in Georgia. Most channels carry large amounts of entertainment programming, including films, serials, music, and sports. A large number of Turkish channels - including TRT1 (the Turkish state-TV), Euro Turk, and News 6 – carry world news. A few channels are closely related to political parties such as AKP (AK Party or Justice and Development Party) and CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Party or Republican People's Party), while a few others have a religious orientation and aim to promote Islam, including the Hilal (Crescent) TV, Samanyolu (Milky Way), and Dost (Friend) TV (Sepehri, 2007, p.96).

In Ardabil, the most popular satellite channels are those broadcasting from the Republic of Azerbaijan, including AZ (Azerbaijan) TV and Lider (the Leader) TV which deliver music, news, and documentary films. ITV (Ijtimaee or social TV) carries social and cultural programs and Azad (Free) TV offers music, news and other programs. Other popular channels include Turkey's TMB (Turk Muzik Bolgesi or the Turkish Music Box) with live broadcasts of Turkish music from Turkish speaking countries such as Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and northern Cyprus. TRT 1, 2, 3, 4, and TRT Turk offer programs associated with Turkish speaking countries, and TRT AVAZ (Song), carries music, cultural, and documentary programs from Turkish speaking countries. Show TV has music, entertainment programs, and series; KRAL (the King) which offers music; and A (Ashk or Love) TV which carries series, music, and film.

2. THE THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Communication is a key component of human society. It was responsible for the creation and gradual development of human society and ordered its structure and function. Without communication, institutions and their distinctions from others could not form (Rahnama, 2005). Communication is required for human cooperation and the interaction at the center of our social lives. The foundation of each society is based on communication. Social orders are not formed only by a network of communications as interpreted by Marx, but by "networks of relationships" which are continuously recreated and joined together to make an enduring society possible.

3. CULTURE AND MEDIA

One of the forces that differentiate new cultures from old ones is the existence of media. The role and importance of today's media led Tampson (quoted from Geranpaye, 1998) to believe that without books, radio, newspaper, TV and other media, today's world is unimaginable. The bicultural changes introduced by media create the circumstances, forms and symbolic concepts of a new age. The media with continuous production and distribution have created a world quite different from the past. People are raised with exposure of these media symbols, and think and organize their behavior according to them. Media provides a place where we go to learn how to behave in our society. These symbols, which form a new culture, facilitate the possibility of prediction and control of people in a society, while there is little possibility and time for resisting these tendencies.

Under such conditions the mass media operate as an uni-directional communication system. However, the communication process is not uni-directional and depends on an exchange between the sender and receiver during the message exchange and interpretation. Umberto Eco asks whether TV, which is a key technology transforming the new age, has a negative effect on its audiences. He presents an insightful interpretation of media effects:

> Depending on cultural and social conditions, there are codes or what we call different rules for interpretation. Messages have an indicative form which can take on different meanings. The media operates within a base of criteria in line with that of the dominant ideology. But audiences, according to their own special cultural criteria make "unusual" meaning for these messages. (as quoted in Castells, 1999)

In other words, media messages may carry the dominant ideology, but audiences will find ways to make media meaningful in their lives.

4. THE THEORY OF USES AND GRATIFICATION

Uses and Gratification theory assume that people actively use the media in ways that provide them with some form

of gratification. The degree of gratification depends on one's needs and interests. Whenever people discover that the media can satisfy a particular need, the more likely they are to continue using that media.

In 1974 Katz and Blumler simply reported that "we never ask what media do with people but conversely we ask what people do with the media". This comment signaled a change in the view of mass media. The source is no longer seen as entirely in control of the media because audiences have choices and use the media in different ways to satisfy different needs. Windhal, Signiser, and Olson, (1992) present a functional perspective to describe the role of media. In this perspective the sender is a limited factor in the mass communication process and generally is one among many factors which have an effect on the selection of content for the audience. The following is a graphic representation of this perspective:

The social, cultural and psychological roots cause →the expectation from media and → other sources which cause → the diversity of media presentation → patterns supplying of needs → it has also other results (which are often unwished).

Figure 1. The Pattern of Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz, Blumler, 1974)

Therefore the reasons for using media are to satisfy particular needs such as gathering information, social contact, entertainment, and social learning and growth, which result from the social, cultural and psychological conditions of people's daily lives. The result is a fairly simple premise. If the media offers a place where people can turn to meet their specific needs, then people will choose to use the media. If the media does not offer a place to meet particular needs, then people will go elsewhere. If using of media was not selective it was not possible to consider. Because of this selective process the media is suitable tool for problem solving with special meaning for users. Research in the past 40 years, shows that audiences use media in the framework of terms (Mc Quail, 1988).

5. PERCEPTION THEORY

One area of cultural studies focuses on how groups with minimum power incorporate cultural products from the dominant social group for their own purposes, and employs them for their amusement, resistance or identity formation. Audiences only take the media capable of providing a way of coding and decoding between self and sender, allowing audiences to use the codes for their own purposes.

This theory which was first described by Stuart Hall in "Coding and Decoding of TV Dialogue" and indicates that media studies perception research is accompanied primarily by cultural studies. As MC Quail writes:

The analysis of audience's perception of the media is an effective research method for research in contemporary cultural studies (Mc Quail, 1997).

Hall presents a four step communication theories: production, broadcast, reception and reproduction, which are "relatively independent". Hall further recognizes 3 perceptual positions through which the TV discourse is decoded:

a) The dominant hegemonic position: Viewers perceive directly and completely the connotation of, for example, a news or political program and decodes its messages according to the expected coding criteria. This is an ideal case of transparent communication.

b) Negotiated position: Most of the audience understand according to their capacity of perception. What is defined as the dominant meaning is conveyed in a professional manner. The individual audience member's interior decoding involves a mixture of compatible and incompatible elements, and meaning is negotiated between these. This decoding accepts the authenticity of a dominant hegemonic meaning, but in a limited and special manner. These coding positions allow exceptions toward the dominant principles.

c) Oppositional position: Hall believes that a viewer can understand both the connotation and denotation of a message, but decode the message in a completely antithetical way. Such a viewer understands the message from the preferred position, but chooses to understand the message using another source framework. John Fiske in Understanding Popular Culture (1989) talks about this, he calls it "producerly" when someone takes a code/symbol and uses it for a completely new purpose. They produce something new with available cultural resources. An example is when the viewer listens to a conversation about international wage limitations and interprets the issue as a class interest. One of the most important and meaningful political moments for a TV channel is when messages are decoded in an oppositional way meaning is read in a way that is incompatible with preferred meanings. Here we can observe the interior debate of an issue (During, 2001).

In perception analysis, a fundamental belief is that media texts are not fixed or have inherent meaning but are meaningful at the moment of their reception by an audience. It means that when an audience reads a text or views a program, they are not a mere receivers but produce meanings as well. The audience decodes and translates the media text with using their social and cultural conditions and in a way related to their mental experience (Mehdizade, 2005). Another hypothesis of this theory is that the audiences are active; they resist dominant and ideological meanings; and they interpret messages using their social and cultural backgrounds, beliefs and attitudes.

Perception theory is in disagreement with older attitudes about mass audiences rooted in the belief that the

attention of audience is a means to influence or control them. Perception theory aims to re-evaluate how media understands audiences and best owes power to minority groups at the margin of society.

Media consumption patterns indicate that by minorities and marginalized groups do not watch programs in which the media production priorities are presented in the framework of the dominate culture, or interpreted as an attempt to control or dominate.

6. NONNATIVES AND MEDIA

One of the most interesting and extended anthropological trends in mass media research is the examination of native media (Sullivan, 1993). This research was pioneered by Worth and Adair. The main contribution of recent studies is attention to the idea that the mass media are social products which make them a very suitable site for political struggles. Characteristics that define anthropological research include race, clanship, symbolic processes and government-National strategies. These studies are rooted in the support for media expansion and its relationship to political anthropology (Guivian, 2011, p.7).

In these studies the phrase "native media" is a broad term employed to cover a spectrum of media and communication manifests. This spectrum ranges from media owned by communities (including active radio stations, TV, satellite and video activities) to local programs produced for local channels. Ginsberg suggests the term "native media" refers to different kinds of media related to activities among minority groups. He specifically considers those groups and races which are known as "first nations" and controlled by the dominant government. He takes the primitive communities of Australia and native communities of southern and northern America as a reprehension of these groups (Ginsburg, 1991, pp.92-112).

This situation is also created in other marginalized communities where their media needs are unmet due to overall attention to the dominant culture. Therefore, members of such marginalized cultures feel excluded and if the opportunity exists will establish communication with the world of the dominant culture's official borders. They seek communities which are similar to them and in this condition seek foreign media, and satellite TV in particular, as the suitable opportunity to establish communication with common cultural groups. This communication might be unidirectional, but it offers an alternate ideology that is consistent with the common culture shared by the media's source. The needs of such marginalized groups when they actively seek and access alternative media sources that speak to them in their own cultural and social codes. Although not ideal, this offers the group some kind of gratification.

This pattern describes the Azerbaijani people of Iran's Ardabil region who use satellite to access Turkish and Azerbaijani channels. In fact these three regions form a cultural domain and Azerbaijani people who do not have any opportunity (such as education, media, academy, etc.) for their linguistic and cultural expression in Iran, turn to the media channels of Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Ginsburg emphasizes that native media and their production must be separated from the production of national and independent media of the people of third world countries. This separation is important because these two classes of the media and their production are based on different historical and political conditions.

In this case Ginsburg employs the concept of "anthropographic media" to refer both to anthropographic cinema and native media. He believes that both of them are the result of self-awareness and public agreement about the necessity of paying attention to subjects related by cultural identity but experience cultural dislocation. The latter refers to the geographic boundaries that define the contemporary world. On one hand communities were separated as a result of the colonial policies of the recent centuries; on the other hand communities were separated because of the overthrow of national borders, globalization processes and postmodern influences, and the diaspora of communities. The communities that exist apart from their country(s) of origin are separated into several geographic parts, and beyond the conventional land borders have developed similar communities of their own. Thus, they are trying to link their cultures by means of mass media (Guivian, 2011, p.9).

McQuail notes that research from Frachon (1995), Baker (1992), Reel (1989) and Loll (1992) show in some countries there are special programs for racial and linguistic minorities. And in other places minorities access the main and dominant media. He takes music as an example and states that the special musical styles of various racial groups are the result of racial and cultural identity. In this case the media can be considered a suitable tool for amusement and as a shared experience and a sense of being united with a special culture. Gray believes that racial difference is effective in predicting interpretations and tendencies in the practical use of media (Mc Quail, 1988).

If special cultural and racial tastes and interests are presented in a way that makes the members and citizens feel they belong it can be expected they are absorbed into the tastes of dominant culture. Moreover they have the chance to present their cultural forms and create a safe, valuable and familiar symbolic environment.

In Iran the media continues to represent one race's values and tastes, the minority cultures remain out of sight and expect some exceptions from the media who, willingly or not, emphasize cultural polarization and remind people of the borders that separate them.

7. AIM AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this paper is to identify the main reasons for using Turkish and Azerbaijani TV channels by Ardabilian people. For this I studied different dimensions such as the effect of these channels on common cultural aspects on Ardabilian satellite users, the effect of language on the amount of time audiences watch, the effect of satellite program diversity, and the effect of some demographic variables such as age, sex, education. The primary research question is:

a) What factors determine the use of Turkish and Azerbaijani satellite TV channels by Ardabilian?

The secondary research questions were asked about particular sources of influence:

b) Do the common cultural aspects between Turkey, Azerbaijan, and the Ardabil region influence the choice of Turkish and Azerbaijani TV?

c) Does the lack of Turkish channels in Iran influence the choice of Turkish and Azerbaijani TV?

d) Does the diversity of Turkish and Azerbaijani programs influences the choice of Turkish and Azerbaijani TV?

e) Does the perceived lack of censorship of Turkish and Azerbaijani programs influences the choice of Turkish and Azerbaijani TV?

8. THE RESULTS OF FINDINGS (EMPIRICAL DATA)

The research findings show that 68.1% of the satellite owners use the Turk sat which was sent to space by Turkey, and 94.5% of the respondents view Turkish and Azerbaijani channels. More than 57% of respondents view the channels more than 3 hours a day. Moreover, 69.7% and 62% of viewers believe that the effect of common cultural aspect in their choice of the channels is "strong" and "very strong" (Tables 1, 2). The findings show that more than 70% of the respondents believe that if there were state channels in Iran that broadcast Turkish content they would view them "much" or "very much". Also, more than 60% of these viewers state that if Ardabilian provincial channel broadcast in their language and addressed their culture and the local conditions of the province, they would view them "much". Moreover these issues decrease the watching of satellite programs (Tables 3, 4, 5).

Table 1
The Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Watching Azerbaijani and Turkish Channel

Choices	Frequency	Percent
Yes	378	94.5
No	22	5.5
Total	400	100

Table 2
The Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Their View About the Effects of Common Ground and Cultural Interests of Ardabilian People With Turkish

The effect degree of cultural Interest and common ground in watching Turkish and Azerbaijani programs	Frequency		Percent	
	Azerbaijan	Turkey	Azerbaijan	Turkey
Very much	102	82	25.5	20.5
Much	177	166	44.2	41.5
Some deal	82	98	20.5	24.5
Few	14	28	3.5	7
Very few	14	16	3.5	4
Never	11	10	2.8	2.5
Total	400	400	100	100

Table 3
The Frequency Distribution of Respondents With Regard to Their Watching of Turkish State Channel in Iran (If Existed)

Watching degree	Frequency	Percent
Much	285	71.2
Some deal	62	15.5
Few	53	13.3
Total	400	100

Table 4
The Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Answers Regarding Their Watching of Provincial Channels (If They Would Be in Turkish and in Harmony With the Culture of the Area) Versus Decreased Satellite Watching

Watching degree	Frequency	Percent
Very much	90	22.5
Much	153	38.3
Some deal	75	18.7
Few	50	12.5
Very few	11	2.7
Never	21	5.3
total	400	100

Table 5
The Distribution of Respondents With Regard to Their Watching of Turkish and Azerbaijani Channels and the Degree of Watching Turkish Channels in Iran (If Exist)

The watching degree of Turkish and Azerbaijani channels watching Turkish channel in Iran	Less than 2 hours		2 to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Above 4 hours	
	AZ	TR	AZ	TR	AZ	TR	AZ	TR
Much	75.5	81.8	72.9	71.5	71.7	82.1	66.3	61
Some deal	18.4	11.4	14.6	12.2	21.7	17.9	13.5	20
Few	6.8	6.8	12.5	16.3	6.5	0	20.2	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The reasons which open people to tend outside of Iran to watch foreign channels are varied. The results indicate that diversity is a desirable element for the satellite programs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the absence of programming diversity in Iran's R&TV programs is one of the reasons for dissatisfaction and lack of interest in this channel. So for the media with less diversity there is an observable decrease of audiences (Most of the respondents were unsatisfied about the unsuitable content and lack of diversity in Iranian programs). According to the findings, more than 95 % of viewers agree that the entertaining "happy" content of Turkish and Azerbaijani programs improve their morale, and more than 72 percent of them agree the programs provide scientific and educational benefits.

That is to say, with increased program diversity viewing time increased. More than 80 percent of all watching groups agree that diversity (scientific and educational benefits, morale improvement) in Turkish and Azerbaijani networks is important (Tables 6, 7).

Table 6
The Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Their View About the Reasons of Watching Satellite by People

Reasons of satellite using by people	Frequency	Percent
Programs diversity	159	39.7
Cultural and linguistic factors	152	38
Visual attractions	49	12.3
Lack of censor in programs and news	40	10
Total	400	100

Table 7
The Distribution of Respondent's Answers About the Effects of Diversity (Scientific & Educational Benefits Morale Improvement) in Turkish and Azerbaijan Networks

Watching degree diversity	Less than 2 hours		2 to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Above 4 hours	
	AZ	TR	AZ	TR	AZ	TR	AZ	TR
Agree	93.9	79.5	72.9	77.6	71.7	71.8	85.4	99
disagree	6.1	20.5	27.1	22.4	28.3	28.2	14.6	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Accessing to new and real news is one of the most important factors to watch a channel. The credibility of resources and channels is the way to trust a channel or even a country that has channels to broadcast. The findings show that more than 84% of satellite TV viewers receive news from Turkish (45.3%) and Azerbaijani (39.5%) channels, and only 11.2% view Iranian news channels.

According to the findings, 52% of viewers receive Iranian news from IRIB, while 48% of them receive the news from Turkish and Azerbaijani channels. The finding also indicates that more than 81% and 78% of the viewers of Turkish and Azerbaijani channels respectively, believe

that these channels do not censor their programs and news (Tables 8, 9, 10).

Table 8
The Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Their Watching of News From Iranian, Turkish and Azerbaijani Channels

News watching	Frequency	Percent
Turkey	197	45.3
Azerbaijan	158	39.5
Iran	45	11.2
Total	400	100

Table 9
The Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Their Watching of Iranian News From Different Channels

Channels	Frequency	Percent
Iran	209	52.2
Turkey	119	29.7
Azerbaijan	72	18
Total	400	100

Table 10
The Frequency Distribution With Regard to Respondent's Beliefs About the Lack of Censorship in Turkish & Azerbaijani Channels

Choices	Frequency		Percent	
	AZ	TR	AZ	TR
Quite agree	92	125	23	31.2
Agree	221	200	55.2	50
Without idea	68	62	17	15.5
Disagree	15	13	3.7	3.2
Quite disagree	4	0	1	0
Total	400	400	100	100

DISCUSSION

The results of interviews and research show people of Ardabil spend much of their time viewing satellite channels of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Over 95 percent watch channels of the two countries. Factors that have led audiences to use the satellite channels include cultural and linguistic factors (40%), diversity of programs (30%), visual appeals (17%), accuracy and lack of censoring news (13%). Respondents said that Turkish and Azerbaijani satellite satisfies them but Iranian channels do not. The respondents said that the Ardabil province channel should be completely indigenous including Turkish culture. They also called for a Turkish national channel that be received over the entire country so all Turks in Iran can use the channel. Other results show that broadcasting Turkish music such as Mugham music, traditional, pop, and others impact people's choice of channels from Turkey and Azerbaijan.

People in Ardabil who watch satellite channels are keen on watching and listening to Azeri and Turkish pop and folk music, and they claim Iranian national channels do not broadcast Turkish films and music. Ardabil audiences prefer films and serials with regional contents and themes. They would like to watch uncensored news and, naturally, they follow news with geographical and psychological proximity such as news of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Being censored, Iranian news in Persian does not give them a sense of satisfaction. In short, Ardabil people believe that Iranian Persian-language media devalues their culture, language, interests and demands.

According to official statistics, Persian speakers constitute 40% of Iran's population, but more than 95% of the radio and television programs are in Persian (Froozfar, 2005, p.3). While some sources report that Turkish speakers constitute 20% of Iran's population and others believe there are even more (Abutalebi, 1998, pp.128-136), the Turkish language is used in only 4% of Iran's radio and TV programs (Froozfar, 2005, p.94).

Broadcasting Persian programs 24 hours per day from Iran's R&TV organization to city where all residents are Turks, with their provincial R&TV broadcast only 30% in Turkish and the rest in Persian because of Iran's government policy, makes residents turn to programs outside of Iran. This pattern describes the people of Iran's Ardabil region who use satellite to access Turkey and Azerbaijani channels. In fact, these three regions form a cultural domain and Azerbaijani people who have no direction (such as education, media, academy, etc.) for their linguistic and cultural expansion in Iran, meet their needs by accessing media channels of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Iran's radio and TV act according to the politicized demands of the government. This research leads to the conclusion: The monopolistic policy of Iran's radio and TV, and lack of attention to the language and culture of minority populations has led audiences to actively seek alternative media sources to meet their needs. In spite of the existence geographical borders that separate people (Turkish, Azerbaijani and Iran's Ardabil province) having common racial and cultural heritage, they have found a way to enjoy a common culture which at the same time provides a unique break from official country politics. They show that one can find relevant cultural traditions beyond official borders and place oneself in a place where cultural exchange is possible. Under the conditions in which Persian programs do not observe cultural and geographical conditions of this region, even though some local programs are broadcast, are not well received. In spite of satellite prohibition by Iran's government, satellite reception of foreign channels is popular, and among the satellite channels they choose those which are more similar to their culture and language. Today's audiences follow content which is perceived as relevant and satisfying , and coding of media to meet the decoding needs of the audience is what invites their use.

Persian programs are broadcast 24 hours per day from Iran's R&TV organization to a city where all of the residents are Turks. The provincial R&TV broadcasts only 30% in Turkish and the rest in Persian because of Iran's government policy of forcing them to receive programs which are different from their culture and social structure. This led people to refrain from using official Iranian media and going to other country's media. The satellite is a useful tool to access preferred foreign programs; this is the case for the Ardabilian people.

CONCLUSION

In Iran all provinces are affiliated with the central government and all economic, political, and cultural policies are applied by the Central Government. The Ardabil province governor and officials have the duty to follow government policy. In the field of culture government officials are asked to follow the official policy as well. Governors look at cultural issues with concern for their security and fear attending to ethnic and multi-cultural interests. Instead of attending to cultural diversity and the cultural integrity of indigenous cultures they try to replace indigenous concerns with the Persian culture the government wants. For example, during Ahmadinejad's governance cultural issues and especially indigenous cultural values were not given any attention. An employee of Ardabil governance provided this information in confidentiality. Lack of attention to world's sacred site of Sheikh Safi's tomb, low importance given to local cultural festivals, little attention to historical sites in the province, and resistance to holding festivals for Persian poets and thinkers in the city of Ardabil occurred when Ahmadinejad was governor in Ardabil. Journalists and Cultural activists believe that governors have tried to silence issues of cultural diversity and identity while expanding Persian culture.

People who live in a region with a special culture and are pressured to conform to cultures other than their own leads to using oversea media which share their culture and language, particularly if programs inside of their country of residence does not provide programming Since the Ardabilian people have access to the satellite channels which conform to their culture and language they take these channels as native media. It is noteworthy that Ardabilian people are living in an area which has cultural commons with nations outside of Iran's border (i.e. Turkey & Azerbaijan Republic). They live with Turkey and Azerbaijani people in a cultural area with its own special parameters. Thus, presenting programs in Persian language and nonobservance of geographical and cultural conditions of the region, although they may receive some programs, but interior media cannot create any change in the people of area and insisting on this act lead them toward satellite to view their own favorite programs, and among the satellite channels they choose one which close to their own language and culture and also the one which meets (surmounts) their needs of media.

Iran Radio and TV channels not only do not change in cultural, linguistic, news polices but also the most provincial channels broadcast in Persian and they apply central government policies. We can expect that more and more people of Ardabil trends to satellite channels. Unofficial statistics show despite a ban of satellite in Iran, more than 40% of people watch satellite channels and it becomes day by day more. Lack of attention from Iranian channels to ethnics makes audiences most unsatisfied in the community and because the government deal with satellite owners. It can be more conflicts and grievances between people and government in future will face government with crisis. Negative conditions between people and government can be triggered to stop the government legitimacy, and ultimately the people set aside the government.

For this crisis mitigation and better conditions arise in the Iranian society and government, Iran media should worth media interests and willing and broadcast programs according to audience's desire. Create variety and visual appeal of the programs, channels devoted to language and culture of each ethnic, transparency and objectivity in News, honoring ethnicities, including cases that could be the Iranian government and people closer to interaction and cause partial satisfaction of the Iranian people from government.

Communication scholars believe that audiences are not passive and they are active. Uses and Gratification theory say that people actively seek out media that satisfies their needs, and in the absence of Iranian channels residents of Ardabil seek gratification in the foreign media of Turkey and Azerbaijan. They decode media messages in the way that they want and think. Media programs and messages should note the environment, culture, language and personal experiences of audiences. Otherwise the audience will choose to watch other channels like satellite foreign channels and avoidance of domestic media can be expected. Meanwhile experiences, research, and studies of this author suggest that audiences should be centered and the media have to be audience based. They should not assume passive and uneducated audiences. The existence of such an attitude means official media will face extinction.

Considering the issues mentioned above, Iran should recognize its ethnic minorities and provide them with facilities which recognize their identity and culture and allows them to blossom. Today press and media are considered permanent sources of education, so regardless of language, can be applied as a way of education and transmission of cultural heritage.

As we know, international conventions, including the declaration of UNESCO consider all languages and cultures as a treasure of human heritage and insists on improving and preserving them. And Iran, as a member of the UN, is expected to comply with such declarations and resolutions.

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