Title of Session: Iranian Social Sciences at the Crossroads (Session II: Discussions)

Name of Session Convener(s): Iranian Sociological Association**,** Hossein Serajzadeh,

Emilia Nercissians

University/Organization incl. City: Tehran

Chair: Emilia Nercissians

University/Organization incl. City: University of Tehran, Tehran.

I) Title of Selected Paper: Cyberspace as an Interaction field of Power, A Case

Study on the Evolution of Iranian Sociological Blogs and Websites in Recent Years

Name/s of Author/s: Nasser Fakouhi

University/Organization incl. City: Department of Anthropology, Social Sciences

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Abstract: Considering the number of blogs and websites, as well as the diversity of cyber communities, contemporary Iran and Persian language is one of the most presented on the cyberspace with an incredible and formidable development in recent years. The forms of this evolution are primarily appeared by interaction between different social groups forbidden or limited in the real space to have these relations. Nevertheless the evolution of the virtual has transformed the society and social relations all over the country even in the remotest areas. The cyber interactions have for subject a large scale from politics to arts and information as well as life personal narrations. This fact had also transformed and transforms permanently the situation of the sociological sciences and their forms and contents through the   interaction within different actors. A new form of cultural cyber journalism to the personal websites of different theoretical schools of sociology and different sociological personalities, cyberspace have contributed to create a new "field" as Bourdieu puts it, where influences as hegemonies and social and cultural capitals are in competition with each other. In a country which lives still in post-revolutionary conditions with official and prescribed forms of discourse, behavior and special forms of control over the production and broadcasting of all sorts of social thought and even personal styles of life, the cyberspace has become inevitably a mean of replacing the real space. This fact is more relievable for those communities such as youth, women and ethnics who are subjected to more limitations in the real world, to have on the cyberspace. The aim of this paper is to present an appraising of the situation stressing on the social sciences especially for the users coming from the three appointed groups

above and the result on the forming of new identities which have real impact in real world of science. The most important issue belongs to women blogs and websites which have become a real social net of communication in the line of their aspirations. For ethnics, the question is more centralized on the language, different from Persian, and for the youth, cyberspace is the main mean to join the style of life considered as "modern" and "free". The differences between three groups and inside each of them are analyzed in another part of the paper.

II) Title of Selected Paper: A Comparative Critical Review of Social Science Methodology in French and Iranian Tradition of Sociological Survey

Name/s of Author/s: Morteza Monadi

University/Organization incl. City: Faculty of Social Psychology and Science of Education, University of Al-Zahra, Tehran

Abstract: One of the most problematic issues of Iranian sociological surveys is the lack of what one call it " indigenous" or "local" approach and theoretical frameworks for studies on our society. Iranian Sociologists, as many others in different countries, use primarily the "western" theoretical approaches and this seems to be the most practical way to do the job. Nevertheless, the results are far from what one can expect to be useful and applied for this society; this is why the quest for some new theoretical forms of approach is more and more appreciated. In this paper our aim is to go further by a comparative critical survey on the base of over 50 scientific papers published in French and Iranian Journals for analyzing and answering to the question what are the methodological problems of this kind of approach i.e. an indigenous sociological theory or to be more direct asking if it's possible at all.

III) Title of Selected Paper: Iran or Persia, A Sociolinguistic Perspective

Name/s of Author/s: Mohammad Jafar JABBARI

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Abstract: The word "Iran", meaning the land of Aryans, has always been an integrated part of the name of the country, since the 4th millennia BC, regardless of any political regime in power. It is now referred to as "the Islamic Republic of <u>Iran</u>". The country, however, was known internationally as Persia, Persiana, Perse, Persien, Perzie and similar words, owing to a socio-historical misinterpretation. It was only as late as 1935, that the word "Iran" was introduced into some European languages. Many people all around the world, among them educated people, influenced by this misinterpretation, still refer to the country as Persia and to its citizens as Persians. This simple fact, that the name of the country is "Iran" and not "Persia", has always been a determining factor in the unity, integrity and solidarity of our multi-ethnic nation. On the contrary, the words "Persia" and "Persian" have sometimes been trouble-producing.
Why it is so significant for the Iranian to call their country "Iran" and why it has mistakenly been referred to as "Persia" will be discussed in more details.

IV) Title of Selected Paper: Rapid Growth of Social Science Education in Post-revolution Iran: Advantages and Disadvantages
Name/s of Author/s: Parviz Ejlali

University/Organization incl. City: -

Abstract: Teaching social science in Iranian universities goes back to less than one century ago. The oldest evidence of teaching social science is an anthropology course for students of "Philosophy and Education" in Tehran University in 1943. Six years later, the first course in sociology was offered in the same university. However, the most important step in the development of modern social science in Iran was taken in 1958, it means opening of Institute of Social Studies and Research and a two years master program in social science in the University of Tehran in 1958. Since then, the number of graduates of the field have been increasing gradually, with an increased rate of growth in post-revolution decades, so that nowadays even in a number of small and remote towns, social science is thought, with whatever quality, and a noticeable number of experts and managers of public sector are graduates of social science disciplines. Furthermore, share of unemployed graduates from population of social science graduates is increasing at an alarming rate (around 12per cent in 2005).
Evidently, such a rapid growth necessitates scrutiny and explanation of the consequences, which can be carried out from four different perspectives:
1. From an educational perspective. It means examining competency and skills of social science graduates comparing with their expected roles.
2. From a human capital/manpower planning perspective. It means answering following and other similar questions: suppose there are enough vacancies for graduates of social science, does their training enable them to contribute efficiently to the economy? And: Are they specialists in its exact meaning, and if so what is their specialization: management, research, policy making, planning, teaching, or social service?
3. From a public sphere/civil society perspective. What are the impacts of social science learning on media contents and journalists' approaches, as well as political arena.
4. From an ideological /cognitive perspective: What are the impacts of social science learning on values, norms and weltanschung of the members of the society.
In my paper I will try to answer these questions.

V) Short reports

TBA

VI) Q and A

all participants

VII) Panel Discussion

all participants