The Stance of Cultural Policy Making in Development Process

Ghorbanali Saboktakin Rizi[1], Zohreh Roghanian[2,*]

[1]Assistant professor of Social Sciences, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Postcode, 3197937551, Iran
[2]phd Student of Sociology, Kharazmi University, Iran, & Faculty member at the University Of Farhangian, Shahid Bahonar Pardis, Hamedan, Postcode, 6516836544, Iran

Abstract   The present study aims at investigating the status of cultural policy making in development process. The importance of the cultural policy making in development along with restrictions and barriers is discussed briefly based on four influential approaches in Iran society. Finally, a suitable strategy for cultural policy making and revision of comprehensive concepts overshadowing the central government role are paid attention to. In a general conclusion, regarding the dominant culture in Iran society influenced by Islamic culture and presence of plurality of culture in society, along with globalization, it is necessary to turn to objective and subjective dimensions of cultural policy making.

Keywords   Cultural policy making, Cultural development, Development-oriented approach, Nation-oriented approach, Ideological view, Engineering view

1. Problem Statement

Undoubtedly, culture plays an important role in human behavior, sustainable development or human society fall. Sustainable development is influenced by economic, social cultural and environment aspects, consisting of some goals which demand a great attention to achieve sustainable development. Cultural dimension, as the basic one of development, demands the managers and planners to make their effort to proceed it locally and globally. Based on the program of cultural development decade (1987-1997), compiled by UNESCO, the cultural development goals are reinforcing cultural identity, maintaining the cultural heritage, reinforcing cultural participation, and promotion of cultural managements while methods, technics and tools such as cultural policy making, cultural planning, cultural education and cultural information are used to implement the procedure (Ejlali, 2000: 11).

Cultural development focuses on cultural capacities. Mervyn Claxton writes the "concept of culture and development" is pertinent to the interaction of "development and culture," including the relations of cultural agents (beliefs' tradition): the development plans ignoring the cultural environment and agents will fail to work. Cultural policy is a creative approach to human society to reinforce society through culture. The concepts of cultural policy and cultural development along with the restrictions and barriers

are discussed in this paper.

2. The Importance of Research

As Iran is in a transition to development, it is necessary for managers and planners to know about cultural activities and policies so that they can base their effort on a global aspect to challenging issues. The culture is a dynamic phenomenon which needs innovative strategies to keep it.

3. Literature Review

Fatemeh Farahani, made a research entitled cultural policy and development in which cultural policy was introduced as one key element of sustainable development and concluded that cultural policy must be concomitant with other social dimensions in a comprehensive frame. The cultural discourse must be the aim of cultural policy along with speech freedom. The implementation of cultural policy must be based on cooperation and public participation to meet the future needs.

Mohammadsadegh Humayun and Nader Jafari Hashtkhani, investigated the effects policy-makers' view to culture and cultural policy, attention to public participation in process of policy development and global trends in cultural policy in compatible with international experiences.

Alizadeh and Ahmadpoor, doing a research entitled cultural globalization and soft power, concluded that in the process of globalization, the efficacy of public diplomacy and public thought about international relationships, enveloped in cultural policy, can help to accelerate the trend.

* Corresponding author:
z_roghanian@yahoo.com (Zohreh Roghanian)

Salehnia etal, in a research about the role of culture in economic development showed that all activities in a system originate from cultural nature .Culture, values and beliefs are the basis of social and economic activities .There have appeared a consensus that the basis of each kind of development is cultural development which can underlie the real development in human and economic development. Therefore, the main concern of governments must be a comprehensive development taking its foundation in cultural dimensions.

4. Concept Definition

4.1. Definition of Policy and Cultural Policy

Policy making is referred to what the government decides to do or not to do (Dye, 2005:1). In another word, policy refers to all the actions of government which influence citizens' life directly or indirectly, and what the government decides to implement or reject (Bennet, 1992).

Cultural policy is considered to be a philosophy-based project, not arisen from individual taste and interest, which originates in intellectual thought to deploy predetermined aims (Perret&saez2004: 13). Therefore, cultural policy making is a project, referred to values and principles which conduct the living things in cultural issues. Development and culture world commission focuses on the use of plurality in cultural capacities, (Prezdequiar, 1998: 264), In fact, the political policy is to converge collective actions to attain a certain goal and plan to use the resources.

In a democratic society, cultural consequences of plans are paid attention to along with economic and political effects. Egustin Girar has defined cultural policy as a system of ultimate goals practical purposes and methods which are followed by a group and implemented by an organization. Cultural policies are identified in a union, a party, an educational movement, a city or a government, but in any case, it shows some ultimate goals (long term), aims (short term), and tools (human resources), incorporated in a perfect system" (Girar, 1993: 171-172).

4.2. Development and Cultural Development Definition

Development is a complex process in which society transits from one state to another and can revolutionize the life dimensions. Focusing on economic aspect used to be the main axis of development which brought about different problems.

These problems originated from ignoring the role of culture in society which led to propose the notion of cultural development, as defined by Egustin, to provide spiritual and material facilities for members of society to help them recognize their own knowledge, enhance their status and accept the principles of development such as punctuality and regularity (Zarrin Ghalam, 2003: 112).

5. The Status of Cultural Policy in Cultural Development

It is worth mentioning that culture encompasses all aspects of human life while there are enumerated three functions for culture and cultural development

    1. Establishing rapport
    2. Authorizing identity
    3. Maintaining and promoting social integrity

In fact, the cultural policy consists of the very principles and values which guide people in cultural issues, aiming at systematic progress of community. The cultural policy related to cultural development can be viewed into two aspects:

5.1. Traditional Cultural Policy

It pays attention to the enhancement of culture by elite while people pay less attention to traditional culture.

5.2. New Cultural Policy

Cultural development and culture are a set of signs through which people can determine their status in world and represent their capability. It helps people to know their culture and even produce it.

Most of developing countries consider culture as the cornerstone of main structures and policies of the society: For cultural policy to accelerate cultural development in a positive manner, there must be a normative package spread among the society members through official education, therefore, in economic subsystem, work, saving and goal-orientation must be considered, in political dimension, responsiveness, accountability, political participation should be propagated, and in social dimension, tolerance, human rights, honesty and truth must be taught while in cultural dimension, cooperation, generosity, and confidence must be taken into consideration so that the conditions of planning a comprehensive program for cultural policy are provided (www.omid.com).

6. Restrictions and Barriers of Cultural Policies

There have appeared different heterogeneities in cultural elements in Iranian society. The presence of three civilization layers in Iran (ancient Iran civilization, Islamic culture and civilization and western culture and civilization), is in great conflict (Tohidfam, 2002: 2), On the other hand, cultural policy faces specific opportunities and restrictions as the following (Bahadori, 1997: 116-118).

    1. Technical progress and revolution of communication, media technology in the second mid-20th century have increased cultural transactions and represented the importance of cultural management.

    2. The spread of accessibility to mass media and

reduction of cultural production waive have led the managers to face challenge which influences the power of cultural production resources.

3. Collective, industrial and trade process of culture

4. International and globalization nature of culture and its vitality in different regions which has forced the cultural policy makers to reinforce cultural elements.

5. The emergence of social phenomena such as women cultural movements, global human rights have made restrictions for policy makers.

7. Cultural Policy and Social Mentality

Despite the barriers and restrictions for cultural policy, there are different social mentalities which can be considered as important factors influencing policies, categorized into objective and subjective factors:

7.1. Objective

These factors are originated from objective structures necessary to exist to implement a cultural policy. For example, implementation of one principle of cultural policy about maintaining Islamic identity requiring restoration, reconstruction and preservation of Islamic architecture buildings. These are observable and can be measured directly.

7.2. Subjective

These factors are not represented externally, but they can influence the procedures of social agency performance. They influence the mentality of the planners and the executives. There are found four subjective macro procedures influencing the implementation of cultural policy in Iran.

7.2.1. Development Approach

Modernization, in development approach, is inevitable which has been realized in western societies. The other societies must adopt it and eradicate the traditional beliefs and values. The modernization programs entered the culture realm and became a platform for political and economic development. In fact, change in cultural and political principles, it is believed, which can create economic development (Tohidfam, 2002: 28),

Centralization is one of the practical results of development programs in Iran. The experts and planners in the capital make policy for other parts of the country and try to assimilate all parts of the country with real center (capital). The consequences of centralization is more obvious in culture what has been called the command approach is influencing all parts of Iran to become similar to Tehran so that all other parts must be assimilated with Tehran (Sedigh, 2010: 23-24).

7.2.2. Ideology Approach

The result of ideologism is holistic process leading to an assimilation and threatens the plurality, while what we understand from culture is the variety of ideas. Adorno criticizes the western philosophy from Plato to Hegel for their reliance on the whole and believes nothing in this philosophy can be known unless it is defined wholly (Ahmadi, 1997: 217).

He believes that holism demands a presupposition of identity while human objects cannot be identical to make a concept overwhelming all the objects (ibid, 218).

Holism has been influential in cultural policy of Iran while we witness a cultural heterogeneity in Iran (Sedigh, 2010: 28).

7.2.3. National Approach

"National government" was dominated from the policies of Reza khan through which unification of government, army, identity and language was the agenda of politics. The modern pattern of nation-government distributed the previous order in Iran. In fact, nation found its meaning from government (Dellacampagne, 2003: 221).

7.2.4. Engineering Approach

There seem to be two main approaches in relating cultural-social theory and political act.

First: positivist approach with the claim of objectivity which believes in a possibility of planning and social organization (Fay, 2004: 62). Here, the society is regarded as a "thing" and can be planned to move in a specific direction.

Second: interpretative approach in which people and individuals have will to dominate their own mental meaning on their actions (ibid, 100), the planning in a society is based on the actors' mental meaning. The differences and heterogeneities should be paid attention to (ibid, 129).

The positivist approach considers the engineering approach in solving problems in cultural fields but there is a great difference in culture foundation with engineering foundation.

The materials and methods of engineering are materials and forces of nature and design and implementation of structures based on mathematical principles while culture is the product of social life and built within the society. Culture is comprehensible based on the interpretative methods which are looked at from a pluralistic view (ibid, 389).

8. The Necessity of New Glance at Cultural Policy-making

To operationalize the socialist and democratic pattern of cultural policy-making and adapt it with the conditions in Iran, the revision in comprehensive concepts of identity based on focal role of central government and oriented toward politics must be recognized to be legitimate to move toward the natural factors such as ethnicity and religion to find a plurality of meaning in Iranian theme. The Iranians are a plural whole in terms of language, religion and ethnicity. Therefore, if cultural policy-making is based on a specific

notion, it loses its efficacy in practice. The globalization, weakening of central power and spread of communication processes have demanded a new look at cultural policy-making. The political and cultural plurality are the direct result of paving this way. This pattern provides a pattern to organize the procedure of so-called democratic collectivism (Vahid, 68-69).

9. Conclusions

Sustainable development and cultural flourishing are two inseparable entities. Therefore, one of the most significant tasks of planners and policy makers is to establish suitable structures for desirable atmospheres in which people can get the opportunity to reinforce their own creative power and evolve a public participation to tackle social problems. Given that cultural issues play an important role in social development in Iran, there must be presented a profound analysis of culture to know its various aspects.

The people`s life style, values, ideology, social norms and tradition must be viewed in an interactional view so that cultural directions can be met in rational way. It is generally accepted that culture does not obey a commanding direction and must be regarded in dynamic perspective so that it can be successfully implemented and promoted in different regions and conditions. Neither does the prescribed sanction impose the change of culture, nor do the people assume the command and the norms formed on a specific idea.

The objective and subjective factors involved in policy making help to embrace all the intricacies hidden in the hierarch and organization of social systems so that the plurality of Iranian society is kept while all the elements move forward to a unified goal and target. This demands an international glance at cultural policy–making.

REFERENCES

[1] Ejlali, Parviz (2000), policy making and cultural planning in Iran, Tehran, Nashre An.

[2] Dye, Thomas, R. Undertanding public policy, Eleveth Edition, New jersey, pearson prentice Hall 2005.

[3] Bennett T. (1992), "Patting policy of cultural studies,"(in) Cultural Studies, Grooberg L. et al (ed.), London: Rutledg.

[4] Perret, J. & Saez, G. (2004) Institutions et vie culturelle, Paris: La Documentation Française.

[5] Prezdequiar, khaviar (1998), our creative variety, Translation group, unesco publication, Tehran.

[6] Girar, Augustine (1993), cultural development; experiences and policies, tr. By abdolhamid zarringhalam, parvaneh sepordeh,and ali hashemi gilani ,center of fundamental researches, first edition.

[7] Zarringhalam, Parvaneh Sirdeh, Ali hashemi Gilani, the center of fundamental researches, first edition.Pahlavan, changiz (2003), knowing the culture, Tehran, ghatreh, second edition.

[8] www.omid.com.

[9] Tohidfam, Mohammad (2002), the barriers of cultural development in Iran, center of recogniation of Iran And Islam.

[10] Bahadori, afsaneh (1997), An introduction to policy making and cultural planning, Tehran center of fundamental research of cultural ministry.

[11] Sedigh Sarvestani, (2010), investigating post-revolutionary discourses and the four trends affecting the cultural policy of Iran, research jornal, no 57.

[12] Ahmadi, Babak (1997), Darkness memories of three Franfurt thinkers; Walt Benyamin, marx Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno, Tehran Nashre Markaz.

[13] Dellacampani, Christian (2003), the philosophy of policy in the contemporary world, Tr. By Bozorg Nadezad, Tehran Hermes publication.

[14] Fay, brian (2004), social theory and political act, tr. By mohammad zare, Tehran cultural institute.

[15] Vahid, majid (2003), policy making and culture in contemporary Iran, Tehran, nashre baz.