Performance Analysis of Cultural Diplomacy of Iran in Central Asia

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the performance of cultural diplomacy of Iran along with existing opportunities and challenges. This study identifies opportunities and capabilities of Iranian cultural diplomacy as well as recognizes present barriers in Iranian cultural convergence in Central Asia. This research also investigates and analyzes reasons and factors of cultural activities of Iran in Central Asia. The paper reports different interaction of Iran with International system, different methods and framework of cultural strategies as well as the performance level of responsible organizations are identified as effective factors on the desirability status of Iranian cultural diplomacy. The results show Iran poses an undesirable performance in cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy, Central Asia, Strategies, Performance, Cultural product.
1. Introduction

Recent decades changes in the filed of international affairs indicate the significance of culture elements in achieving the objectives and improving relations among governments till the point that todays, various cultural organizations at the global level are established so through this method, the basis for international conflicts can be resolved and a proper platform for converging governments and nations created. Then, gaining international reputation and influencing public opinion are some of the important and yet not stipulated goals of countrys’ diplomacy in the field of foreign policy. This matter followed through factors such as location, facilities, opportunities, and cultural potentials of each country in various ways (Khorasani, 2008). That’s why culture is a soft language which can sustain official interactions along with understanding. Thus, governments have always sought to consolidate the foundations of knowledge of their culture and expand knowledge, norms and their unique cultural values, and also expand their generated attitudes beyond their geographical boundaries. As a result, governments attempted to use another tool along with their military and political tools and utilized their cultural elements to align world public opinion with their interests and goals. Accordingly, there is a section which is called cultural diplomacy in the foreign policy of any government and is considered as one of the concepts related to intercultural communication approach. This approach always attempts to strengthen the ability to communicate with others and influence them, particularly people with various cultural backgrounds and identities. (Khorasani, 2008; Ashena, 2004).

Iran can be referred to which has always sought to institutionalize elements and patterns of its culture and identity among the newly established states of Central Asia since the creation of vacuum left by the collapse of former Soviet Union. Iran as a Shiite government is relying on common language, religion, geographical proximity, common ethnic groups, poetry and celebrities, as well as their cultural traditions shared by the governments of the region in many levels of government and official efforts has been attempted to develop sustain relationships with these countries and made a great deal of efforts. Although Iran spent a lot of costs and planed for many activities but these programs were insufficient and these cultural activities were not accomplished in the comparison with the most powerful claimant competitors e.g. Turkey, Russia, and U.S. However, it seems in comparison to the other competitors which, none of them have had Iran’s cultural heritage in these lands, never had a favorable outcome (Emadi, 2009). That’s why, a convergence between nations of cultural Iran are hugely affected by a global order and this matter acts as a divergent factor of cultural Iran in this filed. Moreover, the lack of a determined strategy and goal in cultural activities of Iran in this field along with the lack of strong support for activities, poor functioning of responsible bodies that implement cultural diplomacy, and also the lack of private sector supports for cultural policies of Iran in the region, has led Iran still far away from achieving acceptable performance and results in this area.

Hence, Iran's strategy of cultural diplomacy in these countries also examines the role of influencing cultural factors governing the relations of the country are some of the necessities presented in this research. Despite the long history of cultural diplomacy and having some
common points with some of the other study areas such as diplomacy and national identity, Iran receives a few scholarly attention. Lack of research literature and dispersion of resources in this field, confidentiality issues and the lack of content in the field of cultural diplomacy performance in the spatial domain are considered as the major purposes of conducting this research.

While investigating studies were conducted on cultural diplomacy of Iran in Central Asia in different databases, four major categories have been found as follows:

The first category of studies examined the nature and concept of cultural diplomacy, and also the role and functioning of cultural diplomacy in foreign policy of countries. (e.g. Hassankhani, 2005; Salehi Amir and Mohammadi, 2010; Ninkovic, 1996; Cummings, 2003; Cull, 2008; Apple et al. 2008; Ryniejska, 2009; Mark, 2010). Cultural diplomacy a type of public diplomacy and soft power that includes the "exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding." (Waller, 2009) The purpose of cultural diplomacy is for the people of a foreign nation to develop an understanding of the nation's ideals and institutions in an effort to build broad support for economic and political goals. (Maack, 2001) In essence "cultural diplomacy reveals the soul of a nation," this in turn creates influence. (Nye, 2004) Though often overlooked, cultural diplomacy can and does play an important role in achieving national security aims.

Apple et al. (2008) noted that the use of this form of diplomacy moreover to being highly effective is less costly for the governments. Because though utilizing it, policy makers can gradually reach political, economic, and military agreements. Studies of Ryniejska (2009), Hassankhani (2005) and Salehi Amir, Mohammadi (2010) conformed that cultural agreements can lead to other earlier mentioned agreements. Cull (2008) stated that cultural diplomacy is an effort of a player who attempted to manage international environment through familiarizing other societies with its resources and cultural achievements or though facilitating transfer of its cultural norms beyond its border. Cull (2008) has also asserted that nowadays many ways such as language training, theatrical performances, etc. are there for a country to impose its cultural diplomacy in other countries. Mark (2010) suggested that cultural diplomacy runs for a set of objectives which include not only idealistic goals such as mutual understanding, but also this diplomacy encompasses more functional goals such as the promotion of national interests.

In the second category of studies that examined the documents, cultural agreements and commitment to them is concerned. Bayat (2010) studied cultural documents of Iran with the countries of Central Asia as well as the institutions of cultural interactions, including the Cultural Center of Iran. In fact, Bayat (2010) has overcome the problem of dispersion of the cultural relations data of Iran and cultural agreements signed with other countries particularly the countries of Central Asia as well as the lack of an assembly that collect all information comprehensively and in one place.

The Third category of studies deals with the common historical, cultural and religious factors of Iran in Central Asia, Iran cultural diplomacy in Central Asia, opportunities and challenges,
obstacles and limitations of Iran in this area, as well as foreign policy approach of Iran in this region. (e.g. Sanayee, 2008; Emadi, 2010; Moradi, 2011)
Sanayee (2008) stated that despite the fact that Central Asia has longstanding ties with Iran; however, during the years following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Central Asian countries instead of getting close to Iranian culture, as a cultural crossroads of East and West, tightened their cultural links with the culture of other countries. Emadi (2010) stated that Iran has lots of common cultural, lingual, religious ties with many Central Asian republics; however, despite the efforts, Iran could not yet have taken its rightful place in that area while the Central Asia region is also not yet properly positioned itself in foreign policy of Iran. The necessary capacities of this area have not utilized yet. (Hassannia, Albughabish, 2010; Zarebidaki, 2010; Kazemi and Moradi; 2011).

The fourth category is the studies which examine various identities and cultural theories based on cultural approaches, foreign policy, and cultural diplomacy. (e.g. Wendt, 2005; Moshirzadeh, 2006; Mottaghi, 2007; Chaboki, 2009; Salimi, 2009; Salehi Amiri, Mohammadi, 2010). Identities and interests of governments are formed while interact each other (Wendt, 2005; Chaboki, 2009; Moshirzadeh, 2006). Mottaghi (2007) proposed the interactions of players form international structures from a constructivism perspective. Salimi (2009) suggested some ideas and functional approaches about the role of culture in international affairs. These opinions are related to utilization of cultural phenomena in the economy and politics fields. These approaches identified specified functionality for culture and try to show the role of culture in international affairs through describing these functionalities. (Salehi Amiri and Mohammadi, 2010).
Identifying opportunities and potentials of cultural diplomacy of Iran and also study the obstacles facing integration of cultural Iran in Central Asia are of the principal objectives of present study. Also, this study aims to identify and analyze the reasons and factors affecting the cultural activities of Iran in Central Asia.

This research attempts to answer questions such as "How was the function of cultural diplomacy of Iran in Central Asia? Cultural diplomacy of countries in foreign policy field through which views and opinions can be explained and evaluated? Iran Cultural Diplomacy in Central Asia facing which opportunities, capacities and damages?"
This study was conducted in descriptive- analytical and historical method. In this context, the aim of present study is to evaluate the performance of Iran's cultural diplomacy with the governments of Central Asia and since their independence from the Soviet Union, i.e. a 25-year period.

The samples which are used in this study included five Central Asian countries of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The method of data collection is library method with the use of written resources (books, journals), valuable online resources (websites), sources and reports in the archives of the “Islamic Culture and Relations” institute.
The paper is organized as follows. First, cultural diplomacy in Iran is discussed along with an introduction of regional countries mentioned, cultural commonalities with these countries including language, religion, geographical proximity, common ethnics, and poetry and celebrity poets of common ethnics are investigated. Then, the performance of Iran's cultural diplomacy in Central Asia in two fields of Persian language and literature including teaching Persian language classes in Iranian Cultural Attaché’ as well as movies which is considered as one of the art products are studied. Principles, objectives, priorities and general policies of cultural diplomacy of Iran are also investigated. Next, approaches of Iran in Central Asia which include ideological approach with a focus on Islam, cultural approach with an emphasis on cultural, historical and lingual commonalities, and also pragmatic approach with political considerations have been investigated. This paper is followed by stating a set of solutions for development of cultural diplomacy of Iran in Central Asia.

2. Status of Cultural Diplomacy in Iran

Islamic Revolution of Iran, transforming politics and economy have both changed cultural filed, in such this way which the term culture can be divided to before and after the Islamic Revolution. Particularly highlighting religious and Islamic elements in Iranian culture and fading of ancient and national ceremonies are considered as some consequences and fundamental changes of Islamic Revolution. In early revolutionary atmosphere prevailed in Iran, relying on nationalism and national elements were largely ignored, and this matter has been greatly effective on cultural activities abroad and was influential in international relations. Hence, it can be acknowledged that cultural diplomacy of Iran is the diplomacy of the Islamic Revolution. Islamic Revolution means that Islamic culture is considered as basic principle and foundation in all aspects of individual and social as well as international affairs of the country.

Therefore, it should be keep in mind that Islamic Revolution is truly a cultural revolution, and is founded based on such principles and concepts (Sanayee, 2009). In this regard, Imam Khomeini as the supreme leader of the Islamic revolution referred to the great teachings of Islam and on the basis of religious thought, believed that the basis of a government is in its culture and while accepting the material and economical needs as one of the dimensions of human existence, knew the role of culture as decisive and considered other things as a subsequent of that.

Imam Khomeini (1982) stated that "Undoubtedly, the highest element which is involved in the existence of any country is the culture of that country”. Basically, culture of any country forms identity and existence of that country with deviation of culture, even if it is powerful in other dimensions; yet, it is vacant and hollow. If the culture of a country depends on the West, Other dimensions will also tend inevitably to the opposition, and eventually become depreciate and loses its existence in all dimensions. In addition to the guidelines of Imam Khomeini, the provisions of the constitution in the field of culture as well as guidelines on the issues and topics such as moral values, human dignity, freedom, independence, human experiences, research and
innovation, public awareness, public participation, etc. are noted and is one of the other manifestations of Islamic cultural insight and thoughts of Imam Khomeini and Supreme leader (Sanayee, 2008).

In the meantime, one of the most prominent activity of the General Culture Council and the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution during the past few years was preparing and formulating the principles of cultural diplomacy of Iran in a set of principles, objectives and priorities which has been discussed and set in various sessions attended by scholars, officials and cultural practitioners and experts; Finally, in session No. 228 of the Supreme Council of the cultural revolution dated 11th August, 1992 reached the final adjustment.

Accordingly, the authorities provided their principles, goals and cultural program in the form of a general guideline which not only defines how government should act in this field, but also reflects the orientation of cultural policy at a global level (Sanayee, 2008).

Since, one of the main approaches of Iran's foreign policy is paying attention to the spread of Islamic culture in other countries, particularly among the countries that have better basis for cultural activities. (Ebrahimi and Fahimi, 2009).

3. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in (2011-2015) in Iran. This study covered a 25-year period of cultural diplomacy of Iran and Central Asian countries from 1991 to 2015. The data were collected through via literature review in Persian and English but most Persian resources of present study were books which published by Institute of Political and International Studies of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, al-Hoda International Publications, and the Culture and Islamic Communication Organization. Research Projects have also had an important role in the current study because they include detailed information on the subject of the study. Sanayee (2009) examined Iran's foreign policy in all political, economic and cultural aspects and suggested solutions to improve Iran's foreign policy in Central Asia. Emadi (2011) investigated on the obstacles of Persian language development in Central Asia, as well as cultural policy in this area. Emadi (2011) stated that despite the efforts that underwent after the Iranian revolution and collapse of the Soviet Union, not Iran has taken its rightful place in the region, nor Central Asia gained its rightful place in Iran's foreign policy. In other words, necessary capacities of this area have not been appropriately utilized yet.

On the other hand, reliable governmental publications that supplies reports and latest documentations of political and cultural relations of Iran, as well as five websites of Iranian cultural attaché in the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have also been used in present study including “Adab” quarterly in Kyrgyzstan. Internal issues of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization which intended to introduce
Iranian culture and civilization to Central Asian countries have also been studied. In addition, resources and reports from the archives of the Culture and Islamic Communication were important in the research; because, this organization is in charge of cultural affairs abroad, and in its turn have numerous documents and reports in the field of cultural diplomacy in Central Asia. Although, mentioned organization in many cases, due to or the pretext of confidentiality limited granting access to reports and resources available in their archive.

3.1. Sample
In the light of the objectives of present study, the survey population was identified countries as Iran and all five Central Asian countries including Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. First, the cultural commons among these countries with Iran are discussed. Then, the collected data of cultural diplomacy of Iran in these mentioned countries.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Cultural Shares
Central Asia which is located in the vast Eurasian continental space, has approximately 66,171,000 populations (Sanayee, 2009; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016). The majority of the indigenous people of this region which includes four of the largest group of Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbeks have mainly Turkish descent. An important Iranian element exists in structure of this region’s culture that mainly represented by Tajiks, whose language has close ties with the Persian language. Kazakhstan is the largest country and Uzbekistan is the most populous country of this region (Sarlak, 2016).

In the meantime, though at first glance, the Central Asia region seems like a geographically landlocked region, that made countries of this region dependent on its neighbors and the international community, but the fact of the matter is that this area is known as one of the most important regions of the world under its long history; Central Asia more over to inheriting the large economy of the Silk Road and is considered as a bridge between Europe and Asia and between North and South East Asia; nowadays, due to the discovery of rich energy resources and cultural conditions prevailing in them has been on the intense focus of international players. In particular, this region due to having some common historical, cultural and language commonalities with some regional players including Iran gained of great significance in the relations between the governments of these area (Sanayee, 2009). In this context, cultural commonalities of Iran with Republics of the region include features such as language, religion, geographical proximity, ethnics, poetry, literature and customs. These are effective on cultural, social, political and economic ties between Iran and neighboring countries and in the region (Emadi, 2011).
4.1.1. Language factor

Persian language unlike some other languages is not imposed on this region. But, it is the popular language among people and intellectuals of the region. Persian language is considered as one of the most important elements in cultural relations and the presence of this language in the geography of Central Asia can be seen well. Suffix or locative adverb of "Farsi-Abad" can be found in much of Central Asia. Turkmenistan capital Ashgabat (Eshgh-Abad) has also a Persian name (Hasan-Nia and Alboughabish, 2011). Today, people of Tajikistan are generally Persian-speaking, and Dari Persian language spoken in full vogue among them; Great poems such as Sade-al-Din Eyni, and Golrokhsar raised from the Tajik people, and their poems among the literature lover people of that land have been praised. Many ethnics who are familiar with Persian language are living in Turkmenistan especially around Ashgabat and Merv in and in the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara in Uzbekistan, so that when Iranians travel to the city of Samarkand and Bukhara without knowledge of another language, can talk with the people of these countries. Some people in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also speaking Persian language. However, the number Persian words in the native language of that areas are also abundant (Shirazi, Abolhasan; 2009).

4.1.2. Religion Factor

Majority of Central Asian countries are Muslim. The most important Muslim nations of the region Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and also Dongen are karakalpaks. Despite many years of communist rule, had brought Muslims of the region under government control and their mosques were turned into a museum and stables, but it could wipe Islam from the beliefs of the people of this region. Selecting Islamic names for children, respect religious customs, adhere to the acts of worship such as fasting are all examples of this resistance (Mahmoodi, 2008). While studying ritual advantage, this should be noted that thoughts affinity of Muslims of Central Asia with the teachings of Shiite is very high and extremism could not spread in the region; because basically the influence of extremist thoughts is less successful among people rather than a small part of adventurous youths. Since, people of Commonwealth generally seek comfort and avoid social concerns based on their religious beliefs; and basically, pragmatism of them to religious beliefs is based on part of religious teachings that does not interfere their life and daily comfort. Wahhabism or any other extremist cult does not seem to be able to increase its influence in this region in the short term (Emadi, 2011).

4.1.3. Geographic proximity

Iran has more than 1,500 kilometres of common borders with Turkmenistan which is one of the Central Asian republics and is the region's main road and easy entrance of Iran to the region. This proximity is a unique advantage for Iran that understanding it is clearly evident among cultural competitors of Iran. (Ebrahimi Torkaman, 2007).
4.1.4. Common Ethnic

Some ethnicas also live in the Central Asia whom is living in Iran including Turkmen, Turks, Kurds and Iranians in the region. These common ethnics as well as Iranians who are living in Central Asia are very good medium for the transmission of culture. All these people are proud of being Iranian and boast while hearing the name of Iran. Presence of these people is considered as a great advantage for Iran. Although many of them do not have financial and material capabilities but have good ideas and information. (Abolhasan Shirazi, 2009)

4.1.5 Poetry and Celebrities

Plenitude of common celebrities that all the Iranians, Tajiks, Turkmen, Kazakhs and Uzbeks are proud to have them is another form of commonalities. In addition to the presence and emergence of the Persian language and its vocabulary in geography of Central Asia, Persian poets and literature scholars as well are a major basis in common identity and cultural background of Iranian with Central Asians. Avicenna, Rudaki, Al Farabi, Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr, Al Khwarizmi, Anvari, Matrydy, Kasayee and so are some of the celebrities that according to the people of this region, these nations owe their cultural identity to them (Ebrahimi Torkaman; 2007). Vladimir Lenin's statue of was replaced by Ferdowsi statue in the heart of Dushanbe. The name of the street where Iranian embassy located was changed from Maxim Gorky Street to Tehran Street (Emadi, 2011).

Written and shared valuable legacies in libraries and museums of Central Asian countries that have very high value in the field of research, suggest these commonalities. Meanwhile, in this area Iranology research institutes are also active which play a unique role in cooperation with the governments of these areas, in order to introduce a common national figures and scholars of Iran and Central Asia to the world. (Malekian, 2009; Emadi, 2011).

4.1.6. Common Customs

A single geographical territory in the past caused these countries to have an approach of adapting the culture and customs of Iranian; so that many of the customs and traditions that some of them even in Iran, where is the origin land of them has forgotten but preserved in Central Asia (Mahmoudi, 2008). Attachment to Iranian culture and Persian characters in this region is obvious. People celebrate Persian music and Nowruz. Tajiks praise this celebration as a token of friendship and calling it the grate eve. Just like any other Iranian origins, they also have special rituals during Nowruz. (Hasan-Nia and Albughabish, 2011). Emomali Rahmon’s administration has chosen three heroes for his nation that are Ferdowsi, Cyrus, and Ismail Samani; which in turn reflects the depth of the longstanding ties between Iran and Tajikistan (Emadi, 2011).
In Uzbekistan Nowruz poses a special place. On this occasion, this day declared as public holiday in the country. (Gharebayev, 2006) the people of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are also commemorating Nowruz with celebrations and ceremonies. Yalda night as well is one of the other traditions inherited from ancient Persian culture and is a long-standing tradition; over the years Central Asian people have celebrate this beautiful ceremony and taught its teachings to their children and future generations; it is a common tradition as well. This ceremony poses a special place among the people of Central Asia (Emadi, 2011).

After studying the cultural status of Iran in Centeral Asia and its cultural shares, it is essential to focus on the principles, aims, poiorities and general policies of Iran which did not appear in one place as whole or as guildlines, etc. These are collected and analyzied through in various Iranian official documents separately.

5. Principles of Cultural Diplomacy of Iran

Cultural policy principles which can guide the officials, managers, planners and agents of cultural activities abroad are as following:

● A comprehensive understanding of Islam and Iranian culture and civilization and the promotion of ethics and Islamic sciences and introducing celebrities and the grandeur of the history of Islam and Iran
● Active contacts with the countries and nations and strengthening the bond of friendship and solidarity with Muslims and other nations of the world
● Understanding culture and human experiences and utilizing global scientific and cultural achievements through taking advantages of all useful and appropriate methods and tools
● Efforts to strengthen and promote Persian language and literature and expanding it (Masejed Jameyee, 2009)

6. Purpose of Cultural Diplomay

The goal of cultural diplomacy is to influence a foreign audience and use that influence, which is built up over the long term, as a sort of good will reserve to win support for policies. It seeks to harness the elements of culture to induce foreigners to: (Waller, 2009)

● Have a positive view of the country's people, culture and policies,
● Induce greater cooperation between the two nations,
● Aid in changing the policies or political environment of the target nation,
● Prevent, manage and mitigate conflict with the target nation.
6.1. Goals of Cultural Diplomacy of Iran

Overall cultural goals in Iranian political regime and objectives that indicate the purpose and intention of this collection as cultural policy are as follows:

- Human growth and development of Islamic culture and spread the message and culture of the Islamic Revolution in the international community
- Understanding the requirements and temporal developments as well as reviewing and refining human cultural achievements and utilizing compatible results with Islamic principles and values
- Emphasizing on ideals, spiritual values and Islamic Culture, maintaining and promoting Basiji culture and spirit of sacrifice and ultimate dedication for sacred values of Islam noticing the need to understand the requirements and temporal developments; also, reinforcing strength points and eliminating weaknesses, and appropriate preparation for comprehensive and suitable facing the needs and developments (Salehi Amiri and Azimi Doulat-Abadi, 2009).

7. Priorities and General Policies

In order to implement mentioned principles and objectives, a particular cultural policy codified which represent, priorities and overall policies; "operational policies that also determines the overall policies of monitoring, implementation and coordination centers". Accordingly, those policies which related to the abroad cultural policy of Iran are as follows:

- Giving priority to countries and Islamic communities and "Iranians" abroad
- Contributing to the development of constructive relations between local and foreign artists, writers and researchers
- Developing and strengthening Persian language and literature faculties in science centers and universities within and outside the country, and also strengthening the Academy of Persian Language and Literature and removing foreign words and names from urban areas
- Creating and strengthening the relationship between the Iran Academy and other academies, expanding cultural associations with other countries, and establishing some centers such as Cultural Attaché, International Islamic University and dispatching of groups and sending cultural, artistic materials and facilities to different parts of the world, as well as equipping Cultural Attaches in order to expand and enhance the cultural, artistic, promo, and media presence of Iran in the international arena (Masjed-Jameie, 2009). Accordingly, cultural policy of Iran which derived from higher Islamic values and teachings was considered by many governments. Particularly in countries where there are prepared cultural substrates and cultural and intellectual commonalities between them and Iran clearly can be seen. This is an issue that cannot be ignored, and has a great importance in the context of Iran's relations with these mentioned states (Ebrahimi and Fahimi; 2011).
8. Performance of Cultural Diplomacy of Iran
8.1. Teaching Persian Language and Literature

Despite the policies imposed by the socialist and communist politicians, the Persian language was preserved and survived in Central Asia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the republics of the region, and despite pressures from Moscow and the West to limit the cultural geographical spread of Iran; the approach to original and cultural heritage and in particular, an approach to Persian language and script as an element of the identity intensified among the intellectuals in this area (Kebriayee-Zadeh; 2009). Consistent with these trends, Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Iran in Central Asia has attempted to hold Persian language teaching classes at the consulate and monitoring its performance in the field. It is worth mentioning that since, the Persian language learning have low value for employment in these countries, interest in learning this language is very low compared to other languages such as Russian and English (Emaadi; 2011; and website of Cultural Attaché of Iran in Tajikistan).

Cultural Attaché of Embassy of Iran has set up training courses to fulfill its objectives in the field of Persian language in its place. As, between 2008-2009, In the Iranian cultural attaché in Tajikistan, five classes of Persian language teaching and a calligraphy training class in addition to a Hafiz reading class as well as a Rumi reading class have been held. In Persian script and language training classes, educational texts prepared by several Tajik and Iranian writers collaboration through redeploying first-grade book and availed to enthusiasts (Kebriayee-Zadeh, 2009). Iranian cultural attaché has already focused on teaching Persian script to develop the Persian language; Because, Tajik people speak Persian language but they cannot write the Persian alphabet and write with the Cyrillic alphabet (Russian script). (Emaadi, 2011; website of Cultural Attaché of Iran in Tajikistan, 2015). The Russian language is still considered in Tajikistan as one of the official and scientific languages so that the main language of science and technology can be known as Russian, followed by English. On the other hand, the Persian language in this country is not appropriate for employment. One of the ways to get a decent job and escape from poverty in Tajikistan is learning and Teaching foreign languages such as English and Russian. Migration to Russia and find a job in this country is easy, because the Tajik people are quite familiar with Russian Cyrillic alphabet (Emaadi, 2011).

In Turkmenistan, Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Iran is also holding Persian language teaching classes in different levels of elementary, intermediate, advanced, excellent and translation in its location (Sanaayee, 2009). In 2008, with the efforts of these consulates, teaching Persian courses at 16 levels with 38 classrooms and a total of 667 ladies and gentleman Persian language student has been held. In 2009, the Persian language classes at four different semesters with a total of 190 classes and 2757 ladies and gentleman Persian language student has been held. (Website of Cultural Attaché of Iran in Tajikistan, 2012). At present, Iranian cultural attaché attempted to establish Persian language training classes in elementary, intermediate, advanced, excellent and translations levels. (Fars News Agency Website, 2016). However, taking placing these training courses of Persian language in this country face some hardships including...
lack of space for training, lack of resources and textbooks, and lack of teachers too. Mr. Babalu, deputy of the Persian language development in Center of Islamic Culture and Relations Organization has referred to this sad point that, Iranian cultural attaché in Turkmenistan to hold Persian language courses that attended by only about 200 attendees, faced with the lack of space and was forced to use the pantry of consulate as one of the classes. (Emaadi, 2011).

Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Iran in order to achieve its objectives has been attempted to hold Persian language teaching classes in the Republic of Kazakhstan. There are four Persian language teaching classes that about 109 Persian language students are engaged in learning at the Cultural Attaché. (Sadaat, 2011). Persian language classes hold semester-wise and graduate the end of third semester of training will receive a certificate. Time period of each semester is between 3 to 4 months, and the curriculum utilized is Persian language teaching book, which is illustrated in both Persian and Kazakh languages and provided to the Persian language students. It is worth mentioning that the costs associated with providing teacher, books, awards and so on is covered by the Iranian cultural attaché. (Abedini, 2006; Sadaat, 2011) In the meantime, Asieh-Isa-Bayva as expert on Persian Language and Literature from the State University of Teachers’ Training in Kyrgyzstan stated that “currently, the main concern of Persian learners in Kazakhstan is employment, which there is no vacancy with the Persian language knowledge in Kazakhstan. Iranian companies are not active in this field too. Therefore, the interest in learning Persian language compared to languages such as Russian and English is lower, especially among the academic community.” (Emaadi, 2011). Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Iran till the year 2016 has not been succeeded in holding Persian training classes in its location due to lack of space, and lack of educational resources in the Kyrgyz Republic. Mohammad Hossein Abedini, a former Iranian cultural attaché in Kyrgyzstan knows lack of educational space in this consulate and the lack of educational resources in this field as some of the factors of not holding these courses in this attaché. (Report submitted by Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2013). However, since 14th September 2015, Iranian cultural attaché has established Persian training courses attended by 16 people interested in Persian, 3 sessions weekly. (Website of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, 2016). However, the Persian language in this country is not noticed and every year due to financial poverty, the number of Persian learner students is reducing. In exchange, the Russian language in the country considered as the primary foreign language. (Myandareh, 2009; Emaadi, 2011)

Cultural Attaché of Embassy of Iran has set up onsite training classes to strengthen and expand Persian language in Uzbekistan. Persian language classes in Uzbekistan are semester-wise and will be held in three educational levels. Participants in these classes are mainly people of different age groups who are interested in Persian language. Some of them are university students, but generally are non-student and who have completed diploma. (According to the Iranian Embassy Cultural Attaché, 2010). This is while, the young generation of modern Uzbekistan does not show much interest in Persian language and number of Persian students in this country is very low. (Emaadi, 2011).
In this regard, it is noteworthy to notice the Iranian cultural attaché efforts in developing the Persian language, as well as restrictions in this area which indicates a lack of strong support of Iran in this area; some other points such as, lack of private sector support for cultural policy of Iran in Central Asia, the lack of connection between the economy, politics and culture, Iranian authorities’ focus on political concerns rather than culture, and also the lack of a comprehensive foreign policy strategy in which cultural policy of Iran in Central Asia codified. Many conferences with huge budgets are held by Iran that rather than aiming to develop the Persian language, are focusing on promoting Persian language spoken litterateurs and scholars. On the other hand, presence of claimant rivals in the field of language is much stronger than Iran's presence. For example, the presence and influence of countries such as United States of America, Russia, and Turkey which follow human resource developing strategy is much stronger and more effective than Iran's investment and influence in Central Asia. Russia takes advantages of two important factors of language and population for clout in Central Asia. (Abedini, 2006). Because today, despite two past decades of USSR collapse and emigration of many Russians to Russia, still a large ethnic Russian population are presented in these countries. On the other hand, all the authorities of these s who are communists are fluent in Russian language. These authorities are opposed to the expansion of Persian language and return to the mother's identity because they considered the Russian language as the language of science and technology. (Ugan, 2006; Karbut, 2010). Turkey has gone so far to the point that encouraged some leaders of countries in the region to convert their alphabet to the Latin alphabet. In fact, Turkey tries to achieve a single language and script for developing relations and cooperation between the Turkic-speaking nations. Because, through creating a single alphabet, independent Turkic-speaking nations can communicate in Turkish and on the one hand, Central Asia connection with Iran will be weakened. The West supports Turkey as a model for emulation of the countries in the region and expansion of Turkey’s influence in the pro-Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union. (Sanayee, 2010). United States was also been able to be influential on educational system of this region, particularly in the field of language, through extensive educational cooperation in this area, such as scientific, training and academic collaborations, establishing nongovernmental Soros Foundation, and also creating the Peace Corps. (Sanayee, 2010). In addition, presence of a negative mindset against Iran in the area which is due to two factors of negative publicity of trans-regional powers such as America for preventing the spread of Islamic-Iranian culture in Central Asia, and also the form of governments of ex-communists countries in the region that generally are opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, made Iran's efforts to build coalitions and cultural links in the region, especially in the field of Persian language training to be ineffective or less effective. (Haji-Yousefi, 2006).

8.2. Art Products

Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Iran, in line with its cultural activities in the republics of this region, has set up and participated in international film festivals, cultural weeks, and translated and dubbed Iranian movies to the language of the region's countries including participating in the
International Festival of "Neighbors" in Dushanbe in September 1991, and also, the International Festival of "Didar" in Dushanbe in 2013 and 2016. (Rasoulian, 2012; website of Independent short Films support group, 2016) Eastern star Festival in Kazakhstan, from 23 to 29 May of 2008, as well as showing “God is Nearby” movie directed by Ali Vezirian. (Atbayee, 2009). Iranian movies attend the International Film Festival of “Resistance” in Almaty, Kazakhstan in 2015, and showing some Iranian movies such as “Che” directed by Ebrahim Hatami-Kia as well as participating in online film festival of "Kynolyt" of Kazakhstan in 2015 with 17 Iranian movies. (Website of Resistance film, 2015 and news website of Short Films).

International festival of documentaries and short films were held in Tehran in 2008, and showing several short documentaries about the history of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Samarkand, and its cultural life. During the past years, in the international films festivals which was held in Iran, some movies of Uzbek film directors such as "Alishir-Bavayee", and "Taher-Vazahra" etc. was shown. (Website of Cultural Attaché of Iranian Embassy in Uzbekistan, 2008).

Cultural weeks of film is also held every year in “Fajr” days or on different occasions, and had a broad reflection on the country's media. Including the establishment of an Iranian film week in Dushanbe, in May 1993, in which six feature films, "Maybe another time”, “The shade of fantasy”, “Fetish”, “My daughter Sahar”, "Kani Manga”, and “Bashu, the Little Stranger" has been shown. (Website of Cultural Attaché of Iranian Embassy in Uzbekistan, 2011). Also, Iran's cultural week in the halls of Makhtumkuli in Ashgabat in 2009 and Iran's cultural week in the cities of Marv and Ashgabat in 2011, in which Iranian films of “A Mother’s Love”, “Blue Scarf”, “Bashu, the Little Stranger”, The “Wind Carpet” have been shown. (Culture and Communication, 2010 and Pourkhaleghi, 2011). On the other hand, the establishment of the Iranian film week in 2010, on the occasion of Nowruz festival in Bishkek city, and released several film from Iran and display them Akvmanas TV Channel of Kazakhstan. (Abedini, 2011).

An Iranian Film Week opened in the Kyrgyz Kino in 2011, where some of the officials in the cultural, artistic and scientific, teachers and students of Persian language, writers and poets of Kyrgyz Republic attended. (Journal of Literature, 2011). Also, the opening of the Iranian Film Festival with the participation of Uzbek Kino Film Company in Tashkent in Uzbekistan during September of 2008, in time of celebration of Uzbekistan Independence Day, and showing eight movies from Iranian directors including:

“In the name of the Father”, “So far so close”, “one piece of bread”, “Rain”, “We're all fine”, etc. (Abedini, 2010). Iranian cultural attaché had organized translations as well as dubbing Iranian movies to the language of regional countries. A group of seven Iranian cameramen prepared a report and made movies about historical and cultural sites of Tajikistan by in May 1998. (Rasoulian, 2011). Making an educational 16 episodes film in 2008, entitled "Alphabet garden" in the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of teaching Persian alphabet script that welcomed unparalleled by various groups of people who want to learn Persian script and language. (Kebrayayee-Zadeh, 2009). Translation and dubbing of 11 Iranian movies such as “Gallan”, “Strange Sisters”, “The color of God”, “The Wrong Man”, etc. in the Turkmen language. (Pourkhaleghi, 2011). Also, Iranian movie of «He was an angel" was dubbed by the Iranian
cultural attaché and movie studio of "Elju" of Kyrgyzstan to Kyrgyz language, in 2014 and 2015. (Website of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, 2016). Production of short film of "The incident does not happen itself" by the Iranian and Kazakhstan Young Cinema Society was in 2010. The film was produced and directed by Amir Houshang Danayee, in line with the exchange of experiences, training and co-production of films between the two nations. (Isa Bayeva, 2010). It is worth mentioning that in this context, Iran has several problems including lack of serious support of the arts in the region. So, there is a serious shortage in the field of dubbing and making common art works with the Central Asian republics. For example, in the field of movies dubbed into Kazakh language nothing has been done. Kazakhs once requested Iranian filmmakers to make some films about Kazakh national cultural and personalities, which was met with a negative response from the Iranian authorities; the result was that in 2006 Hollywood made a film titled "Nomads" for them. (Abedini, 2007). In addition, the adoption of short-term and diverse artistic and cultural activities approach, and stick to holding stereotypical ceremonies, as well as the negative orientation against Iran in the region, that somehow affected by the “Iran fear” project of trans-regional actors reveals missed opportunities to develop all-round art relations with the countries of Central Asia. (Sanayee, 2009).

9.1. Iranian Approaches and Tools in Central Asia Region

According to global events and increased competition among superpowers in Central Asia, it can be said that this area is crucial ineligible. Instability is still present in this region and in some of its republics. The regional and trans-regional powers are trying to affect situation of the region through a variety of financial, cultural and political means. Iran is a regional power that has sufficient basis to influence countries of Central Asia which has three different approaches. (Emaadi, 1389). In the present study, approaches of Iran in Central Asia have been studied in three main sections. (see: Figure.1)
9.1.1. Ideological Approach with a focus on Islam

Today, the constitutions of all Central Asian countries respect the principle of separation of religion and politics. However, Islam has risen to an ideology as the religion of majority of Central Asian population. (Toysarakani, 2010). But the reality of the region is that, foreign groups work with the Muslim communities in the Central Asian region more than the regional governments; and in many cases the activities of these groups are contradictory to the interests of countries and Muslims in the region. However, according to the situation of Central Asian countries official clergy should be the connection link between governments and Muslims. But in practice, it seems the opposite has been happening which leads to strengthening the hardline clerical and extremism. The weakness of religious institutions leads to lack of correct knowledge and cooperation of the government with religious environment that sometimes felt threatened from Muslims. This level of weak knowledge of religious environment or policy induced from outside the region has led Central Asian states to accept the framework introduced to them by foreign powers. As an example, America with the so-called fight against terrorism is looking for
al-Qaeda that can be present in all regions of the world, and regional governments are also following this foreign strategy, and put themselves against their Muslim communities that still do not have the necessary knowledge about them. But the Muslim communities are the most important part of these countries and sometimes are the most population of these countries. In such circumstances, the Muslims that have no connection with the course of Extremist are skeptical by the governments because the government has no knowledge of them. Muslim communities prefer to keep away from the government in some cases while they can open their arena and be inventive in contact and dialogue with the government. In these conditions, naturally destructive and foreign powers are exploiting and utilize the gap between the government forces and Muslim communities which are contrary to national and regional interests of these countries. Thus, it was considered as one of the problems of Iran’s approach that the government of the region accused Iran’s regime to cooperate with the regional Islamic extremists. Likewise, many governments of Central Asia know religious extremism as one of the main threats facing their country. So today, one of their main reasons of fearing spread of Islamic-Iranian culture is the same matter which is influenced by the Shiite-phobia and Iran panic projects followed by West. (Emaadi, 2011).

9.2. Cultural approach with an emphasis on cultural, historical and language commonalities

As mentioned earlier, Iran has much in the common in terms of culture, history and language with the republics of the region. Having a common language with the Republic of Tajikistan and also with some cities of other republics in the region is a very important advantage that Iran wields in its relations with these republics. (Toysarakani, 2010). In general, important actions that Iran did as part of this approach in its relations with the Central Asian republics included:

- Holding Persian language training classes in cultural attachés of Iran in the region
  Iranian cultural attaché in the Central Asian region is the main responsible and in fact the only executor of Persian language courses in this region that unfortunately, the number of those who participate in these training courses are very low. For example, in Turkmenistan that the largest number of students attend Persian courses among all Iranian cultural attachés, this number is in span of 400 to 700. But the number of Persian students is much lower than this in other republics. One of the main reasons that the number of students is low in this region is this fact that Persian language is not the language of business and commerce. (Emaadi, 2011).

- Holding Festivals and cultural weeks; Movies
  Cultural attachés of Iran held several film festivals and cultural weeks in an effort to introduce Iranian culture in the republics of the region; the number of these gatherings is noticeable. (Emaadi, 2011). Meanwhile some of them can be mentioned which include: the setting up of the International Film Festival of "Neighbors" in Dushanbe in 1991, as well as holding the Iranian’s cultural Week in Ashgabat in 2009.
9.3. Pragmatic approach with political considerations

Iran to become a regional hegemon attempted to simultaneously notice both the cultural (Iranian and Muslim) and political spheres; this issue intelligently forecasted in the twenty-year wise political vision of Iran. This approach provides a base to create a unity in the region; based on this approach during the next twenty years, Iran should become a developed country being number one in economy, science and technology in the region and an inspiration in the Muslim world based on the will and national commitment and a constructive and effective interaction in the sphere of international affairs. (Sanayee, 2011).

But Iran should notice that this so called pragmatic policy in relations with the Central Asian republics does not lead to extremism. Building trust with the governments should not create distrust with the independent elites, influential movements outside the ruling body and a vast majority of people of these lands.

It seems sometimes necessary balance was disrupted between pragmatism and idealism in the interactions with this region. In the meantime, lack of necessary moderation in the long term, can be damaging Iran's presence and influence in Central Asia. (Emaadi, 2011)

Iran relies on two areas of Islamic and Iranian civilization and relying on its modern government can follow the policy of forming large Central Asia; this approach is geo-culture oriented and is based on a geopolitical and geostrategic Iran and could provide a successful model of foreign policy in this framework. (Sanayee, 2011)

10. Solutions for Developing Cultural Diplomacy

This study, after analyzing the current situation and identifying the challenges tried to suggest some guidelines for growth and development of Iranian culture in Central Asia. (Figure 2).
Hence, useful and practical solutions are as follows:

10.1. Using non-governmental educational and cultural institutions

Today, the task of teaching Persian language in the Republics of this region is the responsibility of Iranian cultural attachés; these cultural attaches by organizing training courses were trying to do this task. Non-governmental educational organizations are not present in this area and this is one of the current issues of this filed. In the absence of such non-governmental cultural institutions such as friendship associations to promote academic and cultural engagements with the countries of Central Asia, the condition of Persian language and common cultural heritage of Iran with these countries is threatened every day.
10.2. Removing anti-Iranian and anti-Islamic propaganda

Seventy years of communist ruling in Central Asia, not only develop an intense propaganda against Islam, but in order to separate the people of this region from their ancient history and culture, demonizing took place against Iran. In particular, because Iran was placed in the West Block during the Pahlavi era, this matter has led to the anti-Iranian propaganda in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, in the years after the Soviet collapse an unfair propaganda was carried out by Western countries against Iran that this issue led to hide Iran's real face and revealed an unreal face of Iran which is the result of such propagandas. Accordingly, removal of seventy-years-old propagandas of communist system and correcting false beliefs toward the contents of Iranian-Islamic culture should be one of the priorities of Iran's cultural foreign policy in the region.

10.3. Development of Persian Language and Literature

Persian language and literature can be considered as the connecting factor between the region's governments. Hence, developing Persian language in this region should be emphasized more than ever. In this regard, it is suggested that adequate funding for the development of Persian language as independent academic discipline should be provided through supporting related centers and institutes. It also recommended that, the development of Persian script and research on literary and historical commonalities should be placed in the future plans of Iran. In order to promote the Persian language, sending experienced teachers, supplying modern equipment and teaching tools, holding various competitions among Persian learners and students, and introducing and presenting better textbooks for teaching Persian language in this region is recommended.

10.4. Increasing presence of Iranian companies

One of the main problems exist in developing the Persian language is that this language is not the language of business and commerce. Therefore, it is not welcomed by most of the people. Many people have chosen this language because of their own interest and participated in training courses organized by Iran’s cultural attaches; but unfortunately, many students do not choose this field of their interest, but because of desperation caused by not accepting in any other discipline. One of the reasons of this issue is the lack of strong and serious presence of Iranian companies in the region.

10.5. Increase utilization and support of resident Iranians

Iranians who are living in Central Asia are a great opportunity for cultural interactions. Therefore, the presence of these forces is a great advantage for Iran in the field of cultural
activity. Accordingly, through more financial and political support of these people, they should be utilized in spreading Iranian culture in the republics of the region.

10.6. Increasing cultural and artistic exchanges

To increase cultural and artistic exchanges various examples and cases can be cited. Increase publishing Persian books in the region, holding joint cultural week in the form of movies, theater and music, as well as making movies about common cultural and artistic characters are some of the factors that can help to increase cultural and artistic exchanges.

10.7. Focus on cultural activities compared to joint political activities

The authors recommended giving first priority to cultural targets and activities then go for joint political activities. In fact, cultural activities should be noted as pre-requisite for political ones.

10.8. Due attention to the cultural activities of competitors

Iran is facing three Russian, Turkish and western cultures in Central Asia region. Hence, disregarding spread of the aforementioned cultures can be considered as losing cultural place of Iran in the region; especially when most of these cultures are trying to remove Iranian-Muslim culture from the region. Accordingly, it is necessary for Iran to pay attention to cultural activities of its competitors in this region and respond appropriately to their actions.

10.9. Dynamicity of Iran's cultural attachés

Iran's cultural attachés in the region should be the most active cultural attaches of Iran abroad. Especially with regard to vast cultural continuities, cultural attaches should organize all cultural interactions between Iran and regional countries and attempt to develop them in the form of cultural agreements between the parties and through utilizing all legal capacities. In this regard, sending cultural and artistic groups, collaboration with the cultural authorities of Central Asian countries in establishing various cultural programs, distribute and provide access to movies, TV series, Iranian documentaries as well as holding training courses are some of the points that should place among the activities of cultural attaches in the region. This will not only introduce Iranian culture and civilization to the region, but is also considered as an important step towards the development of cultural ties with Central Asia’s nations.

10.10. Paying due attention while selecting cultural representatives

In sending ambassadors and cultural attachés and other executive forces, priority should give to efficient forces who are familiar with the language of the region; particularly educated scholars.
who are expert and resourceful in cultural and international issues. This is significant from this point of view that there is a serious issue in this area.

10.11. Balance and interaction among cultural bodies of the country

There should be some sort of interaction and balance between the vision, plans, and targets of all cultural bodies that are involved in determining and implementing cultural diplomacy of Iran in the region to prevent the occurrence of duality and confusion.

10.12. Codifying a comprehensive plan for each country

Iran needs to formulate a comprehensive plan for each of the Central Asian countries according to their cultural origins and history of their cultural relations with Iran. In other words, some kind of balance should be created in cultural exchanges with each of the countries in the region. For example, in a country like Uzbekistan, promoting political Islam should not be insisted, but emphasis on the historic and cultural ties will be more efficient. In addition, the cultural strategy should focus on stabilization of cultural characteristics and emphasize on avoiding short-term and subjective activities.

10.13. Emphasis on the connectors and cultural, historical and civilizational commonalities

No country such as Iran poses cultural and historical affinity with Central Asian countries. Thus, while countries without any cultural background are opening different schools are offices; Iran should also be more sensitive to its cultural activity in the region. In this regard, emphasis on the connectors, as well as cultural, historical and civilizational commonalities can largely rebuild historical position of Iran in the region. This matter is a close way to achieve greater convergence with governments of this region. Cultural convergence with governments of the region can bring positive balance in favor of Iran globally, and place this country in focus of foreign policy of Iran more than ever.

11. Conclusions

This study aimed to evaluate the performance of cultural diplomacy of Iran in Central Asia between the years 1991-2015. The study shows that Iran has not benefited reaching appropriate achievements in this region because of its different interaction with the international system, cultural practices and implementation strategies, as well as the efficiency of its institutions responsible for the cultural diplomacy. Hence, this research in the form of theories benefited the utilization of culture as a software solution for the transfer of knowledge, art, ideas, beliefs, customs in support and ensuring political and economic goals of country. Because, the use of cultural tools and elements in international relations and in the relations between states by targeting subconscious of audiences and influencing their behavior is an appropriate factor in
furthering the objectives of foreign policy of countries; that can not only facilitate political and economic relations, but also assists governments in their national interests. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and emergence of the newly independent republics of Central Asia, international system enters a new era of interaction in various spheres of political, cultural and economic which it eventually led to efforts of regional and trans-regional actors to achieve their desired political, economic and cultural objectives as well as increasing their influence area in this region in the sphere of regional interactions.

The independence of the republics of this region occurred in the circumstances as they lack efficient political and economic structures and while they faced an identity crisis. Thus, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the needs of these countries to access constructive designs and patterns from the other countries of the region to overcome their internal gaps and shortcomings; gradually has provided context required for the presence of regional and trans-regional actors. All these factors, along with historical, cultural, ethnic and language as cultural background has increasingly provided the grounds for the emergence of Iran as a regional power. Till the extent that, Iran attempts to institutionalize its cultural patterns and elements of its identity among the new states of Central Asia. But, despite great endeavors in the field of cultural relations, could not achieve favorable results in this region. In a way that, in some cases regional and trans-regional competitors such as Russia, Turkey and America have been succeeded to fill the cultural, economic, military and security vacuum in Central Asian countries. This matter is extremely important because the developments and the ongoing processes in the region will have dramatic and direct consequences on security and national interests of Iran in the sphere of its political-cultural existence. Because, any sort of the presence and influence of regional and trans-regional powers in this region could mean the loss of Iran's historical position. In the meantime, Iran's specific relations with the West caused, in addition of propaganda and demonizing Iran that has been done in the region, Iran has far distance to achieve its optimal performance in this region. So that, regional and trans-regional competitors do not want Iran’s influence in the region at any cost. In a way that, to avoid Iranian influence in the region, they use a variety of methods including the establishment of Iran-phobia Project. Of course, the leaders’ thoughts of these countries which are generally former communists and are opposed to the Islamic regime in Iran is also involved to this negative bias toward Iran.

One of the other issues which is raised in expansion of Iranian-Islamic culture in the region of Central Asia is cultural policy of Iran; Iran does not pose a clear and comprehensive plan and strategy for this region. The combination of these factors caused the performance of cultural diplomacy of Iran between the years 1991-2015 not to have satisfactory outcomes.
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