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The Discursive Construction of Iranian National Identity in Selected Speeches of Imam Khamenei

A B S T R A C T

This paper examines the discursive construction of Iranian national identity in selected speeches of Ali Khamenei, the Supreme leader of Iran. Four speeches of 22000-word corpus were selected and analyzed, based on the theoretical framework adopted by Wodak et al. (2009). Based on his charisma, relationship with his people and long history of Iranian success in negotiation, Khamenei has formulated the national identity of Iran via using the theme of 'home nationlis' represented by the in-group and out-group sub-categories, the construction of a common political present and future, narration of a common political past and creation of common culture. Also, the paper has shown that this identity was characterized by topoi of superiority, difference (from the US and its allies ideologically), revolution(ary) Iran, and religiousness (to refer to Islamic beliefs and values). Also, it has shown that using constructive and justification strategies were dominantly used for this unique Iranian identity.

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البناء الخطابى للهوية الوطنية الايرانية في خطابات مختارة للإمام الخامنائي

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المستخلص

تبين الدراسة البناء الخطابى للهوية الوطنية الايرانية في خطابات مختارة لقائد الثورة الاسلامية الامام الخامنائي.و تم دراسة و تحليل عينة مؤلفة من 22000 كلمة، اعتمادا على نموذج التحليل ل ودك و اخرون (2009). واعتمادا على الكاريزمة الخاصة به و علاقته الخاصة مع شعبه و تاريخ ايران المتميز في المفاوضات، شكل الامام الخامنائي الهوية الوطنية الايرانية باستخدام ثيمة "الهوية الموحدة" و التي تمثلت ببيان الانماط المتعددة للمجاميع المساندة و المناهضة. فضلا عن ذلك، تمكن من تشكيل المشتركات السياسية الحالية و المستقبلية للإيرانيين، و الحوار المشترك للإيرانيين تاريخيا ، فضلا عن البناء الثقافي المشترك لهم. و بينت الدراسة ان تلك الانماط والثيمات تميزت بمواضيع مهمة كالرفعة لشعبه و الاختلاف الايديولوجي مع اعدائهم كالأمركيين وحلفائهما. و كذلك اشارت الدراسة لمواضيع بارزة اخرى كإيران الثورية و الهوية الدينية لها متمثلةً بالتمسك بالمبادئ و القيم الاسلامية. و ادت الدراسة على اعتماد استراتيجيات التشكيل الخطابى و التبرير المعتمد على دلائل كسمات اخرى للهوية الوطنية الايرانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الامام الخامنائي، البناء الخطابى، ايران، الهوية الوطنية، تحليل خطاب نقدي

Introduction

Identity is used in the relevant literature to refer to the relationship in a way that attests a sameness or equality between two or more entities. Therefore, it is a relational term. Ricœur (1992) contributes to the concept of the relationship between people and their national identity by distinguishing two components of identity which are 'sameness' and 'selfhood'. According to Ricœur's theory, there are three sub-components of sameness: (1) numerical identity, (2) qualitative identity, and (3) uninterrupted continuity. The first is based on the notion that two occurrences of a thing, that are referred to by an invariable noun, do not form two contrasting things but the same. In this sense, identity denotes sameness. The second argues that striking resemblance can be said on two things to the extent of interchangeability that can be qualifiable. Here, identity is associated with the criterion of quality. The third is concerned with temporal change from beginning to last phase of the development of what is considered the same individual. The concept of 'sameness' is dialectically related to the concept of selfhood. The latter focuses on the individual person rather than the collective interaction between or among

different individuals, hence it is not relevant to this study. In other words, it has to reveal relevant answers to Goff & Dun (2004, p.237):

“Indeed, many argue that identity presumes an other from which the identity group can be distinguished. But who (or what) is the other? How does it come to be identified and defined? What is the nature of the relationship between the self and the other? Under what circumstances might the other be welcomed into the identity group?”

Bassiouney (2014,p.37), in her study of Egyptian national identity, confirms the same questions, but these are presented as follows:

“Because it is the most difficult question in the world, ‘who are you?’ Do you actually know how to answer it yourself? And, by the way, why do you ask me this question,?”

Moreover, national identity, according to (Wodak et al., 2009), is produced by discourse, since nations are imagined communities and mental constructs containing all the imaginary complex of ideas that define the collective unity and dispositions that are identified and depicted by their boundaries where members of these communities believe in those ideas and relate to them in an emotional way (ibid, p.23). Those complex ideas contain all the heritage of that specific nations including cultural, habitual and historical characteristics that constitute the imagined mental construct. Nations are “system of cultural representations” (Hall, 2012, p. 612); therefore, a national culture is regarded a discourse that builds identities by enacting meanings about the nation that define it and construct identity. Furthermore, before embarking on unveiling the main features of the framework of the discursive construction of national identity, Wodak et al. (2009) encompasses Bourdieu’s (1994) contribution to the discursive construction of national identity. Bourdieu (1994) highlights the role of the state and its manifestations, i.e. institutions, laws, regulations, and officials, in generating a national identity. The state, according to Bourdieu, can shape mental structure and enforce common visions and principles and thereby it can contribute to the construction of national identity of the people that the state runs (ibid, p.7).

Therefore, Wodak et al. (2009) state that the national identity of the people, who regard themselves as belonging to a national group, is embodied in the social practices of those people. Their national identity is constituted by state, institutional, media, political social practices and that the discursive practice, being a form of social practices, plays a pivotal role in the formation and constitution of national identity. Laws and regulations which govern the social practice of inclusiveness and exclusiveness of people can present institutional discursive practices. The social practices, whether they are actions or discursive acts, may, positively or negatively, veer off the laws (ibid, p. 30). Those deviations will be shown in analyzing the data of this paper. Moreover, there are seven assumptions that are presented in Wodak, et. al. (2009):

- i. nations are mental constructs and imagined in the minds of the people.
- ii. national identities are discursively produced, reproduced and transformed as well as destructed.

- iii. national identities imply conceptions of attitudes and emotions that the people who belong to the same identity share between themselves.
- iv. social practices and their conditions run hand in hand with the discursive practices to justify or maintain the status quo.
- v. the construction of national identities focuses on uniqueness of the specific identity in addition to ignoring internal differences among the bearers of a specific identity.
 - vi. there is no one national identity as it is mutable and discursively dependent upon the context.
 - vii. culture and politics are highly featured in the discursively construction of national identity.

Iran is not different from others. The continuous battle for Iran's national identity was raised dramatically after its Islamic revolution 1979, where Khomeini and later Khamenei worked hard for maintaining the Islamic nature or identity of their nation. Before 1979, Iran was known as being managing its dominance over the Persian Gulf. That dominance was supported by being the influential ally of US and Europe where Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran, as Afkhami (2009) confirms out, was a strong ally and a close friend to the West and the strongest man in the Middle East (see Abed, 2017). Hunter (2010) examined Iran's foreign policy in the post-Soviet era, where issues bilateral relations and political conflicts with the US, Saudi Arabia, Saddam Hussein and his Bath regime, and Europe are dealt with.

From 1979 till today, Iran is the center of any political and diplomatic issues; of course, the justification of such 'crisis' has been fully examined and illustrated in the weekly speeches and meetings of its supreme leader with his people and officials. The Imam has concentrated on the fact that the Islamic identity of Iran and rejecting any kind of interaction with Israel and the US (see Fayazmanesh, 2008) are the main reasons behind both the hard power and soft power used by its enemies along these fifty years. What supports the Iranian leaders' insistence and confidence is their long history and knowledge in negotiations, its people's local and national hatred to The US and Israel, their calls for the right of nuclear programme (see KhosraviNik,2010), as well as their historical heritage; the assassination of General Suleimani (Jan, 2020) and many Iranian nuclear physicists and scientists like the assassinated Fakhrizadeh (Nov, 2020). That is, the Iranian leaders find support from the inner circles (see Cordesman & Kleiber (2007) for Iranian military forces), even clashes and riots occurred in times of elections (see Asgharzadeh, 2007). Respectively, KhosraviNik (2010, p.1) summed up the whole situation of Iran as follows:

“The Islamic revolutionary ideology of the Islamic Republic and its continuous tension with the West, especially the United States, has been the result of a swing in Iran's official worldview from a pro-Western, monarchical regime to an anti-Western, post-colonial, theocratically-oriented regime after 1979. This overhaul has created a political entity which fiercely challenges the hegemony of the West using a set of religiously painted post-colonial aspirations. At the same time, it establishes its own legitimacy by reviving and reintroducing these very challenges.”

The present study investigates the discursive construction of Iranian national identity in Ali Khamenei's selected speeches by involving three interwoven dimensions "contents, strategies and means and forms of realization" (ibid, p. 30).

The Selected Approach

Five thematic areas used in analyzing the Austrian identity in (Wodak, et. al., 2009). First, "the linguistic construction of homo Austriacus" (ibid, p. 30) which represents the emotional attachment that Austrians have to their nations, their national mentality and behavioural characteristics of identity. 'Homo Austriacus' means 'Austrian person' as well as the common culture and history that are attached to this concept (Wodak, 2002). That concept is then contrasted with "home eternus" or the other, to define who are members of in-group and who are from out-group. It serves to establish a commonplace and embodiment of common identity. Therefore, it is employed in this paper as 'homo nationalis'. Second, "the narration and confabulation of a common political past" (p.30). This will include tales, stories and accounts about political success, prosperity, stability and failures, crises and instability. Third, "the linguistic creation of common culture" (ibid.). Which includes religion, language, art, or science among other things. The fourth is "the linguistic construction of a common political present and future" (ibid.) which is "explored in terms of citizenship, political achievements, current and future political problems, crises and dangers, future political objectives and political virtues" (Wodak, et. al., 2009, p. 31). The final thematic area is "the linguistic construction of 'national body'" (p.30). Which can be paraphrased into the 'national territory', with all its borders and boundaries including its landscape and recourses (De Cillia, et, al., 1999, p. 160).

Wodak et al. (2009) interpret strategy in accordance to the definition of Pierre Bourdieu. The basic concept of this interpretation is that strategies have goals but the steps in reaching the goals are not always planned as strategies can be applied in an automatic way. However, Wodak et. al. (2009) do not agree with Bourdieu that strategies and actions are interchangeable, since actions are mere realizations of strategies. From that understanding, they believe that strategies are applicable on discursive social activities that are aimed at reaching a goal. Therefore, they introduced four macro-strategies that would help in discovering how national identity is constructed through discourse. The macro-strategies are "constructive strategies, perpetuation strategies, strategies of transformation, and dismantling or destructive strategies" (p.33). All those strategies are interwoven and occur simultaneously.

- Constructive strategies are more comprehensive than the other macro-strategies. This type of strategies supports unity, identification and solidarity which is done through differentiation.
- Perpetuation strategies protect a threatened identity through reproducing it. A subgroup of this type of strategies can be discerned which is strategies of justification. They are used to justify the current situation or status quo using collective past memories in order to establish "we-group" in defending a threatened national identity.

- Transformation strategies transform well-established identity into another form that rhetorically conceptualized by the speaker.
- Dismantling or Destructive strategies destroy the current national identity but do not give an alternative to what might replace it.

These macro-strategies can be served with several micro-strategies which are important to linguistically uncover the discursively construction of national identity. Instances of similar micro strategies can be identified. Since those micro-strategies are dependent on the data and the text chosen, this paper will not embark on applying all of them in the analysis of the data, but for the purpose of research, this paper gathers the most important sub or micro strategies, mentioned by Wodak et. al. (2009:36-42):

1. Constructive Strategies include assimilation, inclusion, continuation / unification, cohesivation, singularisation / uniqueness, autonomisation, strategy of avoidance, and vitalisation.
2. Strategies of Perpetuation include continuation and defence / strategy of avoidance.
3. Strategies of Justification include shift of blame and responsibility, downplaying or trivialisation, and legitimation or delegitimation.
4. Strategies of Transformation encompass positive self-presentation, autonomisation, discontinuation or dissimulation, devaluation (downgrade) or negative connotation of political continuation, and vitalisation.
5. Strategies of dismantling and destruction include discrediting opponents / negative presentation (of others), heteronomisation or warning against heteronomy, dissimulation or exclusion, trivialization, pronouncing somebody or something dead, and cassandra Strategy.

Wodak, et. al. (2009) present three types of reference for any national identity, namely: personal, spatial and temporal. The first can be discerned through the use of pronouns and the second can be discovered through the inclusion or the exclusion of people or through adverbs of place. While the third can be detected through adverbs of time. Besides, they highlight the use of metaphor in creating the discursive strategies. Metaphors can create sameness and differences between people and objects. The authors focus on three tropes of metaphors that are utilized for this purpose, namely personification, synecdoche and metonym. The use of metonymies helps to hide sameness between people by replacing the “name of the referent by the name of an entity which is closely associated with it in either concrete or abstract terms” (p.43). Moreover, synecdoche “replaces the name of a referent by the name of another referent which belongs to the same field of meaning and which is either semantically wider or semantically narrower” (p.43). Two important types of synecdoche are mentioned by the authors which are generalizing and particularizing. The former replaces a narrow expression with a wider one while the latter replaces a wide expression with a narrow one. Personification, which is the third trope, is realized when an abstract entity is given human qualities. The other

linguistic means, cited by the authors, is the use of the deictic 'we'. It is employed to create sameness as 'we-group' can include people or exclude them. There are also the metonymic, synecdochal, historical 'we', as well as the use of 'we' as the country. The use of passive voice can be employed to conceal agents, too.

Methodology

Four speeches of Ali Khamenei, with a corpus of about 22000 words, are selected for the analysis of this paper. Ali Khamenei is the current supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and has been in office since 1989. From 1981 to 1989, Khamenei was the President of Iran (Khamenei.ir, 2019a). The reason behind choosing the speeches of Khamenei in analyzing the discursive construction of Iranian national identity is because he is regarded as the most powerful authority in Iran since he is not just the supreme leader only as he is also the head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces of his country (ibid). Khamenei's speeches are published on his website Khamenei.ir. The dates of speeches are as follows: April 17th, 2019; May 14th 2019; May 29th 2019; and August 7th 2019. Although they took place consecutively, the reason behind choosing these speeches is because they happened during a time of tension between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America. Sanctions, against Iran, were renewed and further sanctions were imposed by the United States because of its nuclear program. The Speeches address the Iranian people and try to unify their ranks in such hard times for the Iranian nations. The reason for choosing four speeches only is because of space constraints as they are deemed appropriate for such paper and research. This paper will try to reveal the five thematic areas, mentioned by Wodak, et. al. (2009), namely:

1. "The 'homo nationalis'".
2. "The narration and confabulation of a common political past".
3. "The linguistic creation of common culture".
4. "The linguistic construction of a common political present and future".
5. "The linguistic construction of 'national body'".

These ideological themes are assumed in this approach to be realized through certain discursive strategies and linguistic means. Extracts from the four speeches of Ali Khamenei will be analyzed according to the five thematic areas mentioned above. The thematic area 'homo nationalis' will be subdivided into in-group and out-group. The tables below show the topoi of each extract and the strategies adopted in presenting such topos.

Analysis and Discussion

1-The theme of 'homo nationalis'

a) *in-group*

The thematic area of in-group is used by Ali Khamenei to construct the Iranian national identity. The deictic 'we' is used extensively to denote the national 'we' as well as other

linguistic structures. Different strategies are used for this thematic area. Different topoi occur under this thematic area. The most important topoi of this thematic area are superiority of Iranian than other nations, similarities between Iranian people, bravery of the Iranian people, victory achieved by armed forces and in the field of science, the Iranian Islamic revolution and religion. Assimilation, uniqueness, unification, cohesivation, and warning against Heteronomisation are the most used strategies. This sub-thematic area of in-group which is subsumed under 'homo nationalis' main thematic area, continues to make the majority of themes. In few cases, Ali Khamenei depicts the Iranian nation as part of the Islamic Ummah, referring to the Islamic countries which are the antithesis of other non-Islamic communities. The in-group representations feature very high in situations of conflict as Iran continues to be pressured by the United States of America and other countries regarding perusing its nuclear programme and activities. Moreover, Ali Khamenei focuses very high on assimilating the Iranian people into the revolutionary community and society as the topos of revolution surfaces in his speeches more than one time. He uses this topos when addressing the youth as if the revolution is still ongoing. Religiousness and depicting the Iranian nation as a conservative community is another topos which reoccurs repeatedly in the speeches. Ali Khamenei continues in the speeches to describe the Iranian nation as well as the Iranian youth pious and religious. The topoi of revolution and religion occurs almost simultaneously. This combination of revolution and religion depicts the Iranian nation and gives it its identity as an imagined community. Examples of this theme can be seen in the following extracts:

“the Armed Forces are one of the main manifestations and elements of national power”“You are the nation’s fortress. You are the fortress of the masses of the people. This fortress is not particular to wartime” (April, 17th 2019)

“One of the advantages of working for the Islamic government and the Islamic administration is that if you work for God”.... “Our military forces are careful. Our security forces are more careful today”. (May, 14th 2019)

“Before the Revolution, there were universities, but they were weak and ineffectual on the matters related to the world”..... “As for shortcomings and problems, it is true that our academic environments suffer from certain problems including in the area of science, culture, education and the quality of management” (May, 29th 2019)

“One day, we were the first in the world in terms of national and public knowledge. One day, this was the case, but later on, we suffered from decline”“Iranian talent is higher than that of the global average” (August, 7th 2019)

This theme has been revealed by a number of topo and micro-strategies. For example, the first extract recites the topoi of superiority with autonomisation to emphasize Iranian national autonomy and independence, whereas the topoi of defense for legitimation as a micro-strategy

in the second extract. In the third extract, two topoi were recited, namely revolution and circumstances, with autonomisation and vitalization as micro-strategies, respectively. Superiority with shift of blame and assimilation as micro-strategies, respectively, were reported in the fourth extract.

b) Out-group

The second component of the main thematic area of ‘homo nationalis’ is the theme of out-group. It is discursively used in the speeches of Khamenei to differentiate the Iranian people and nation from other nations as ‘others’. As it is the case with the in-group sub-thematic area, Khamenei uses different strategies and topoi to discursively construct this notion. The most important topoi are difference of the Iranian nation than other nations in the world, religiousness and piousness of Iranian nation, the west and the western culture in antithesis of Iranian oriental nation and community. Discrediting opponents, negative presentation of Others are among other strategies used to achieve this out-group thematic area. This sub-category of the main thematic area of ‘homo nationalis’ comes second in terms of occurrence. It comes right after the in-group sub-category or theme. As it is the case with the in-group sub-thematic area, the out-group theme is discursively used in the speeches in the time of hardship and pressure as the United States of America continues to impose sanctions on Iran. Furthermore, Ali Khamenei, an Islamic scholar himself, and the spiritual leader and head of state of the Islamic Republic of Iran, makes uses of the religion and different Quranic terms in the construction of the national identity of the Iranian nation, especially in depicting a clear-cut line between the in-group and out-group. In one example, shown in the extract tables, he makes the most of some Quranic stories, as it is the case of (qarun) who is a rich tyrant (written also as ‘Korah’ in English), mentioned in the holy Quran. Khamenei depicts the rulers of the Gulf states, surrounding Iran as (qaruns) since they are rich as rulers of oil-producing countries and tyrants in his opinion. Examples of this theme can be seen in the following extracts:

“this is not the case in all countries. In many countries, the armed forces are not an element of a nations power, rather they are an element of the power that belongs to tyrants”.... “That little man [US president] has trillions of dollars of debts with different calamities and difficulties in his own country.” (April, 17th 2019)

“they want our officials to surrender to the US and they want to pit the people against the Islamic Republic. This is the goal of the enemy”... “This confrontation is the confrontation of willpowers. And our willpower is stronger than theirs! As well as having a strong willpower, we are reliant on God.” (May, 14th 2019)

“They say that they have not been produced by us! They know nothing about these products at all They say such things and as for foreign writers – American and European – accuse, with the help of some treasonous Iranian individuals, this large number of academic graduates of lack of depth and knowledge.” (May 29th 2019)

“Two centuries during which foreigners set foot in our country and implemented their policies, one feels that this decline and backward movement is not a natural state of affair, rather one feels that it has been imposed on us”. (August, 7th 2019)

The first extract reports the topoi of difference with two micro-strategies, namely negative presentation of Others and trivialization, respectively. The same topoi is seen in the second extract, but two different micro-strategies were reported, namely heteronimisation and discrediting opponents. This indicates that Imam Khamenei seized the possible chances to emphasize the difference between Iran and the US and its allies. Of course, the charisma of Trump was among the main targets of this theme due to his behaviour and calls in his public meetings. The topoi of the West is reported five times in the third speech, all these are with negative presentation of Others. They were described by ‘they’, ‘others’, ‘foreigners’, ‘colonialist’, and ‘transgressing’. Also, the Others includes Saudi officials and writers when Khamenei describes their negative propaganda against Iran’s ‘defense products’. In the fourth extract, the topoi of difference is with shift of blame as a micro-strategy, when Khamenei shifts the blame of Iranian’s suffering and misfortunes to the West and their policies for along two centuries.

2-The theme of narration and confabulation of a common political past

This thematic area comes fourth after in-group, out-group and linguistic construction of a common political present and future thematic areas. Khamenei uses, here, uses different strategies and different topoi come at play in this thematic area. The most important topoi here are achievement, victory, backwardness and revolution. The most important strategies used in effecting this theme are defense, shift of blame and responsibility and assimilation. In constructing this theme, Khamenei makes use of the achievements made by the Iranian during the revolution to build this notion of one nation. Regarding the negative events experienced by the Iranian in the past, he tries to shift the blame and responsibility of those events to other nations and countries, in his pursuit to construct a national identity. Examples of this theme can be illustrated by the following extracts:

“Those who have gotten used to humiliating the nation and respecting the traitors to this nation keep repeating that it was Reza Khan who established the modern army”.... “but this army resisted and fought at a full-scale war for eight years! We were witness to their endeavors and moves.” (April, 17th 2019)

“they had an agent in Iran who dominated all affairs: Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was their agent. He would work for them and he would support them. He was in charge of all affairs. They had such an agent.” (May, 14th 2019)

“They are witness to this great scientific progress and this scientific movement which has been launched in the past two decades – starting about 17, 18 years ago, in mid 1380s--” (May, 29th 2019)

“This backwardness manifested itself in one way during the rule of the Qajar.”.... “it showed itself in a different way during the rule of the Pahlavi.” (August, 7th 2019)

It is evident from these extracts that Khamenei has concentrated on presenting the narration and the political Iran under the ruling of the ‘Pahlavi’; of course, this is done via the topos of illustrated example, victory, achievement and backwardness, respectively. The micro-strategies used for achieving this theme were assimilation, pronouncing somebody dead, shift of responsibility and shift of blame. That political past of Iran was described by Khamenei as ‘humiliating the nation’, ‘an agent (referring to Mohamad Reza)’, ‘to engender despair’, and ‘backwardness’. On the contrary, he emphasized the new Iran after the Islamic revolution as ‘much stronger’, ‘constitution’, ‘achieve’, ‘enrichment’, and ‘scientific movement’.

3-The theme of linguistic creation of common culture

The occurrences of this thematic area are equal to the occurrences of narration of a common political past theme. Among the strategies used in this theme are uniqueness and assimilation. The important topoi that occur under this thematic area, are similarity, religion, revolution. Khamenei, here, draws extensively on Islam and the Islamic revolution in reminding the Iranian of their culture. Most of the cultural themes are of an Islamic nature rather than of a Persian one. Having done so, Khamenei portrays the identity of the Iranian nation by drawing on cultural and political elements as it is seen in the fourth thematic area below, which is something that resembles the approaches adopted in the construction of Austrian national identity as presented by (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 5). The following are example:

“Send salaams to your spouses and families on my part and congratulate them on Army Day, on the 15th of Shaban, on the Eid of Shaban and on Eid Nowruz.” (April, 17th 2019)

“the month of Ramadan will be an auspicious month for all you”.... “You can see the examples of this during the various events that take place in the country such as revolutionary commemorations and celebrations.” (May, 14th 2019)

“This was seen in the Revolution as well. During the Revolution, in that great popular movement, the people were present in the frontlines.”... “Our foundational beliefs do not permit us to build weapons of mass destruction” (May, 29th 2019)

The extracts of this theme are related to Iranian culture and its Islamic nature. Khamenei used topos of similarity, religiousness and revolution for this purpose. Majority of these topos are characterized with uniqueness as micro-strategy. No evidence of this theme is reported in the fourth speech. Also, the supreme leader of Iran has used Islamic festivals and sources like ‘Ramadan’ and ‘sharia’, Iranian national festivals and policies like ‘Eid Nowruz’ and ‘revolutionary celebrations’, and ‘not after such weapons (of mass destruction)’.

4-The linguistic construction of a common political present and future

This thematic area comes third in terms of occurrences in the selected speeches. Khamenei uses strategies like singularization, vitalization, uniqueness, and assimilation among others. Although the occurrences of this thematic area are ranked third among the other five thematic areas, but it is the most diverse theme regarding the topoi tackled by Ali Khamenei. The topoi of this thematic area range from superiority, difficulty, achievement, disaster, youth, development, religion and others, to name just few. Khamenei uses this thematic area to vitalize the Iranian people and encourage them to participate in building the Iranian state. When addressing the current sanctions, imposed on Iran, by the United States of America, Khamenei tries to mobilize the Iranian and assimilate them by giving the current events a revolutionary force. An example of that is when he says in a speech, entitled “[t]here will be no negotiations and no war” on May 14th 2019, while addressing Iranian government officials: “[y]ou might say that those achievements occurred during the revolutionary era. Well, in the present time too, the Revolution still thrives” (Khamenei.ir, 2019b). In doing so, Khamenei depicts an imagined community that is revolutionary and active. Therefore, he gives the Iranian identity these characteristics differentiating it from other nations’ identities through drawing on political and cultural elements as it is mentioned in the creation of a common culture theme above. Moreover, disaster, hardship and difficulties, that feature under this thematic area, are interwoven in the speeches and used by Ali Khamenei to discursively construct a national identity using different strategies such as shifting of blame. Khamenei shifts the blame of the difficulties that the Islamic Republic of Iran suffers from, especially those related to the sanctions imposed, to the United States of America. He mentions these sanctions to explain to the Iranian people that they are not imposed because of Iranian actions but they rather imposed because of aggressive actions by the others, thus constructing a national identity of Iranians that is different than other nations. The following are examples of this theme:

“That was a good interpretation of the realities of today’s army.”... “They will not be lost in history. The Iranian nation saw this.” (April, 17th 2019)

“In the present time, enthusiastic revolutionary youth are not fewer in number than the day when the Revolution achieved victor”.... “Our economy suffers from a few maladies. If we can cure them at this point in time –at a point when we are faced with the issue of oil and with sanctions and the like – in my opinion, our economy will take a big leap.” (May, 14th 2019)

“Well! we should show determination and produce it inside the country. One of the tasks that should definitely be carried out in the area of economic matters – the Ministry of Industries is in charge of this – is to do something to help our industries and mines to pursue their work smoothly” (May, 29th 2019)

“I have placed my hopes for the future of our country and the Revolution”..... “we are among the first five, six countries in the world.” (August, 7th 2019)

5-The linguistic construction of ‘national body’

The topoi that occur under this thematic area are mentioning of idyllic places or places of disasters, superiority and protest. The strategies adopted here assimilation and inclusion. The occurrences of this thematic area is lowest compared with the other four thematic areas. It occurs only by %5 as it is shown in the chart below. The reason for that can not be attributed

to Ali Khamenei discursive approach but it could result from the small corpus of speeches that this paper works upon, due to constraints of space and time. However, what is interesting here is that the occurrences of this thematic area were lower than other areas in the construction of Austrian national identity, which is something that this paper share with aforementioned research (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 74). Examples are the following extracts:

“After the Kermanshah earthquake, the presence of the army and other divisions of the Armed Forces was a vital presence”... “This has been achieved thanks to the Islamic Republic” (April, 17th 2019)

“Persian Gulf”..... “every Friday, there is a demonstration against the US in Tehran” (May, 14th 2019)

No evidence of this theme is reported in the third and fourth speeches. Majority of the examples are related to inclusion as the used micro-strategy.

The pie chart below shows the percentage of occurrences of each one of the five thematic areas. As it is obvious, the in-group sub-category comes in the top of the list with % 26 followed by the out-group sub-category with % 23. Both the in-group and out-group belong to the same thematic area of ‘homo nationlis’, thus this category constitutes almost % 50 of the occurrences. The thematic area of linguistic construction of a common political present and future comes third with % 22 while the thematic area of the linguistic construction of ‘national body’ comes last with only % 5. Both the thematic areas of narration and confabulation of a common political past and linguistic creation of common culture occur by % 12 each.

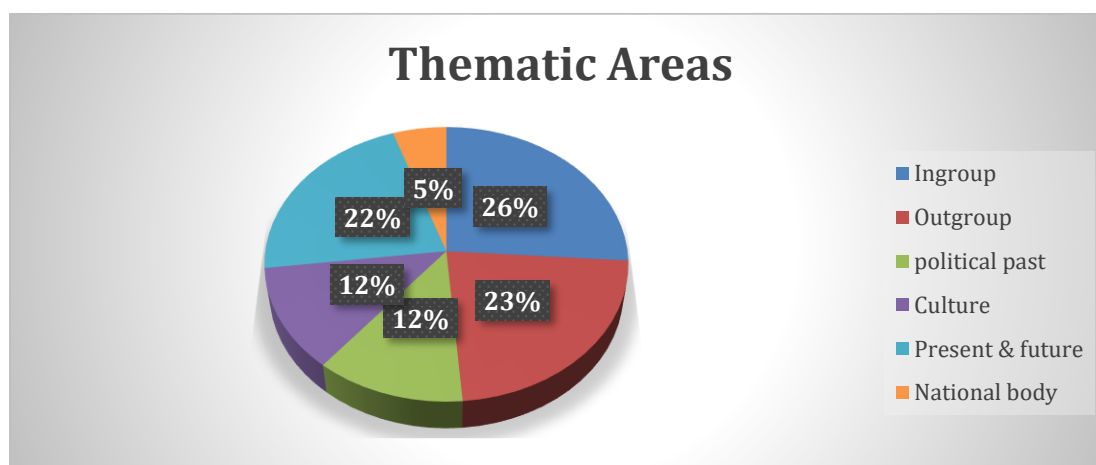


Figure (1): Thematic Areas

As far as the topoi found in the data, the following table illustrates them.

Table: Topoi, Percentages and Examples

No	Topoi	no	%	Examples
1	superiority	20	16.62	National power, army, economic infrastructures
2	similarity	8	6.55	Islamic Ummah, national currency, we
3	difference	17	13.93	You, tyrants, other countries, followers of Satan
4	illustrative example	3	2.45	Humiliating the nation
5	victory	3	2.45	Resisted and fought at a full-scale war
6	idyllic place	2	1.63	Islamic Republic of Iran Army
7	disaster	3	2.45	Kermanshah earthquake
8	defense	2	1.63	We, dependence on oil,
9	resistance	1	0.81	resistance
10	bravery	1	0.81	Careful
11	religiousness	13	10.65	Materialistic, intimidated, Ramadan
12	revolution	14	11.47	Revolutionary, revolution
13	difficulty	4	3.27	Pressure, twists and turns
14	achievement	7	5.73	Our accurate missiles, work hard
15	determination	1	0.81	determination
16	youth	2	1.63	manpower
17	development	1	0.81	Housing development
18	threat	1	0.81	Afraid of
19	protest	1	0.81	Demonstration against
20	circumstances	1	0.81	Suffer from
21	responsibility	1	0.81	responsible
22	media	1	0.81	Media
23	The West	7	5.73	The West, they, the others
24	backwardness	4	3.27	misconduct
25	despair	2	1.63	Despair
26	sanctions	1	0.81	Sanctions
27	hatred	1	0.81	Hatred
Total		122	100	

They indicate evidently that the Imam has tended to reveal the actual national identity of Iran by citing topoi of superiority, difference, revolution and religiousness. These are supported by reference to Islamic nature of Iran, Iranian culture and his belief in his country's human and material resources, which in turn used as the weapons for resisting the enemies. With reference to Abed's examination of Khamenei's sustainable mechanism of soft war, these helped Iranian national identity to be distinctive, in comparison with its neighbours. For the use of micro-strategies, the following table illustrates their numbers and percentages:

No	Micro-strategy	No	%
1	Autonomisation	5	4.09
2	Uniqueness	15	12.29
3	Assimilation	18	14.91
4	Legitimation	1	0.81
5	Unification	1	0.81
6	Heteronomisation	3	2.45
7	Vitalization	11	9.01
8	Shift of blame	15	12.29
9	Shift of responsibility	5	4.09
10	Negative presentation of Others	17	13.93
11	Trivialization	8	6.55
12	Discrediting opponents	5	4.09
13	Pronouncing somebody dead	4	3.27
14	Defense	1	0.81
15	Continuation	3	2.45
16	Singularization	3	2.45
17	Downplaying	1	0.81
18	Positive-self presentation	1	0.81
19	Inclusion	4	3.27
20	Dissimilation	1	0.81
Total		122	100

The table above reveals that 59 instance of constructive strategies are reported in the selected speech, with % 48.36. Also, 30 instances of justification strategies, with %24.59 are also reported. One instance of perpetuation is found, with % 0.81. Strategies of transformation are cited 19 times, with % 15.57, while 13 times, with % 10.65 for strategies of dismantling and destruction. These results are presented in the following figure:

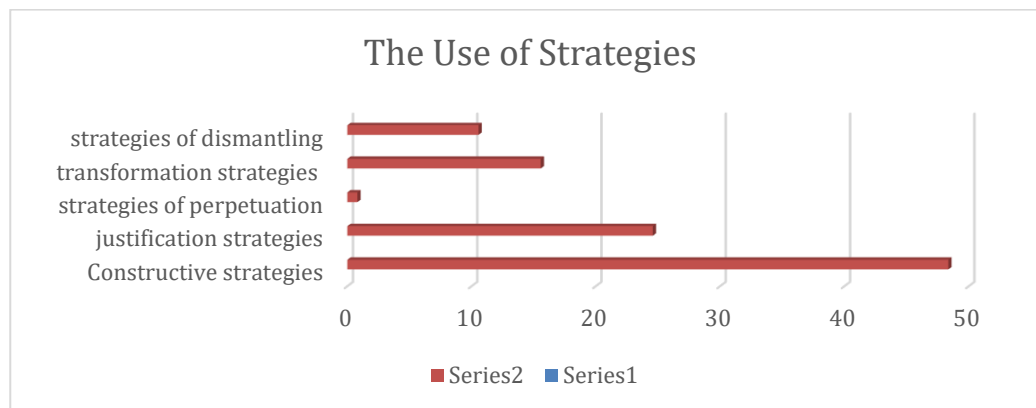


Figure (2): The Use of Strategies

Conclusions

This paper has explored the discursive construction of the Iranian national identity in the speeches of Iran's spiritual leader and head of state Ali Khamenei. Four speeches of Khamenei have been selected with a corpus of about 22000 words. The paper has drawn on the methodological framework as presented in the book "the Discursive Construction of National Identity" by (Wodak et al., 2009). The paper has looked for the five thematic areas which are discursively used in constructing a national identity. All five thematic areas have been discerned in the speeches of Khamenei. The development of a shared political present and

future, storytelling of a common political history, and formation of common culture have topped the list of other thematic areas, followed by the topic of 'home nationlis' represented by the in-group and out-group sub-categories. In terms of occurrences, the development of a 'national body' has come last, which is something that this work shares with Wodak and her colleagues' research. The analysis of speeches has also shown that topoi of superiority, difference, religiousness (Islam) and revolution were extensively drawn upon by Khamenei in almost all the thematic areas discussed in this paper. Furthermore, the paper has discerned those topoi of difficulty, hardship and the like, due to the sanctions imposed on Iran, have been discursively used in constructing the Iranian national identity. Therefore, the dispositions and characteristics of the Iranian identity can be said to be a revolutionary Islamic one. The research also has revealed the political present and future thematic area has been the richest area in terms of topoi tackled in the speeches, discussing socio-political present and future events. That's all was based on using constructive strategies more than others.

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