



The Era of Hyperreality and Strategies for Realizing a Desirable Political Attitude in Contemporary Iran

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ABSTRACT

Objective: In the contemporary world, media do not simply reflect events and realities; they have become active agents in reproducing and constructing social reality. This condition, explained in Jean Baudrillard's theory of the "Era of hyperreality," represents a fundamental transformation in citizens' perceptual patterns and the profound influence of media representations on their cultural, social, and political beliefs and attitudes. In Iran, these developments have confronted the process of realizing and sustaining attitudes aligned with the ideals of the Islamic Revolution with significant challenges, such as the distortion of goals and slogans, the creation of unrealistic narratives, the widespread dissemination of false information, selective representation of historical realities, the formation of media-based movements, and the proliferation of organized propaganda.

Method: Drawing on Baudrillard's theoretical framework of hyperreality and using a semi-structured interview method, the present study investigates the strategies that the Islamic Republic of Iran should adopt to achieve a desirable political attitude in the era of hyperreality.

Findings: The findings indicate that a deep understanding of the new transformed world, the design and use of public symbols appropriate to the logic of hyperreality, intelligent interaction with new cultural authorities, the power of narrative-building and the priority of presenting the first narrative, attention to media balance and honesty, the creation of narrative synergy and coordination among media outlets, and the institutionalization of behavioral and verbal integrity among officials are among the key requirements for achieving a desirable political attitude in the context of hyperreality.

Conclusion: These results suggest that the realization of a desirable political attitude in Iran, consistent with revolutionary ideals, depends on adapting to the media logic of hyperreality and developing coherent, value-based, and coordinated media strategies that can sustain authenticity and public trust in an era where reality itself is mediated and reconstructed.

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Introduction

In contemporary political sociology, the fundamental role of a desirable political attitude in strengthening the pillars of the nation-state, solidifying the foundations of social cohesion, and stabilizing the legitimacy of political systems is considered self-evident not only by researchers but by all actors in the political and social spheres. This concept encompasses a coherent set of beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns that organize the complex interactions between citizens and the structure of power, and, as a solid foundation, it decisively shapes the quality of the effectiveness and efficiency of political systems.

However, at the dawn of the third millennium and in an era dominated by media, rapid development of communication technologies, and the hegemony of the phenomenon of hyperreality—where the boundaries between reality and media representation are increasingly blurred, and reality itself becomes a media artifact—the realization and stabilization of a desirable political attitude among citizens have been fundamentally transformed and challenged. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a political system born of the Islamic Revolution and possessing a critical and confrontational approach to the dominant global order, faces far more complex and profound issues and obstacles in this turbulent media landscape.

The unprecedented and widespread penetration of social networks in the daily lives of more than 60% of Iranian citizens (Jamaran, 2024 AD/1403 SH) has created serious challenges in the formation and stabilization of a desirable political attitude. The increasing addiction to the internet among different social strata, the rapid virtualization of educational and cultural fields, and the emergence of media-based riots and unrest all point to a deep crisis in the interaction between society and media. In addition, the relentless onslaught of toxic propaganda and destructive indoctrination, the emergence of new and sometimes unconventional citizen demands and norms such as organized civil resistance against the hijab law, and the creeping attempts to institutionalize the "White Marriage" lifestyle are serious challenges to maintaining social cohesion and a political attitude aligned with the ideals of the Islamic Republic and the values of the Islamic Revolution. These signs indicate the problematization of a desirable political attitude in the face of relentless media influence and the emergence of a complex and contradictory "hyperreal" space, which requires a rethinking and presentation of intelligent solutions. In this regard, the central question of this research is: 'What strategies should the Islamic Republic of Iran adopt to recreate a desirable political attitude in the era of hyperreality?'

1. Literature Review

To clarify the position of this research, a comprehensive review of related works was conducted. A selection of the most important of these works is analyzed below:

1. Jean Baudrillard (1929), in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, introduces the concept of "Simulacra" as copies without an original and "Simulations" as imitations of real processes. He believes that contemporary society is a place where "Simulations" have overtaken reality and original meanings have been lost. This view provides a philosophical framework for understanding "Hyperreality" and the media's impact on political attitudes, and it is the theoretical foundation of this research.
2. Robert M. Entman (2009), in "The Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy," with a "Heideggerian" approach and analysis of political events in the U.S., shows how media have penetrated democratic structures and changed the direction of public opinion. This work provides an important conceptual framework for analyzing the complex space of media and politics in the present era.
3. Manuel Castells's (2001 AD/1383 SH) book "The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society," with a focus on concepts like "Network society" and "Mediated politics," collects and analyzes the trends of social, political, and cultural changes of the information age. This work provides a valuable framework for understanding the impact of information technologies on the structures of human societies and political issues.
4. Ameli et al. (2024 AD/1403 SH), in their article "Dual-Spacing and the Representation of National Identity on Instagram," use a critical and data-driven discourse analysis approach to show the conflict and interaction between Iranian and Islamic identities in this space, emphasizing that national cohesion requires a balanced approach to identity representation.
5. Shaykh Ansari (2021 AD/1400 SH), in an article that performs a secondary analysis of social science research, examines the impact of Web 2 technologies on Iranian society. The findings show that these technologies have weakened national-religious identity and family values but have strengthened political participation and social relationships.
6. Basiriyani and Khaniki (2015 AD/1400 SH), in their research "Iranian Policymakers and Social Media Policymaking," address the challenges of social media policymaking

in Iran. The results indicate the inefficiency of structures, scattered decision-making, and a lack of coordination among institutions, which makes the policymaking process difficult.

7. Qasemi et al. (2020), in their article "The Desirable Model for Media Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Confronting the U.S. Media War," offer a proposed model that includes adherence to the leadership, preservation of Iranian-Islamic identity, confrontation of ethnic divides, strengthening of security structures, and support for cyber infrastructure.

In contrast to these studies, the present article focuses on the concept of "Hyperreality" as a mechanism for the production and representation of realities by the media; a concept that has been less thoroughly examined in Iranian social sciences. In addition to explaining the related challenges, the main goal is to provide practical solutions for recreating and strengthening a desirable political attitude in the new complex space. This research, with its novel theoretical framework and strategic suggestions, assists policymakers in the path of achieving a desirable political attitude.

2. Overview and Theoretical Foundations

2.1. Conceptualizing a Desirable Political Attitude

In political sociology, a desirable political attitude is defined as a normative system of beliefs, values, orientations, and behaviors of citizens toward the political system, power structures, and civil institutions. Its realization has a direct and undeniable link to the stability of the political system, the strengthening of social cohesion, the enhancement of political participation, and the achievement of good governance (Almond & Verba, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 27). In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a desirable political attitude has several fundamental characteristics and components rooted in Islamic teachings and the goals of the revolution:

First, obedience to the leadership, which is the basis of the legitimacy of the Islamic system and obedience to the leadership, is a religious, national, and revolutionary duty (Imam Khomeini: 12, 250). Second, religious faith and practical adherence to the Sharia are presented as the fundamental identity of the Islamic society. Practical adherence to the Sharia in individual and social dimensions is considered a manifestation of being a Muslim and a commitment to divine values (Khamenei, statements, 19/04/1392).

Third, national unity and Islamic cohesion, which are the secrets to the system's stability and strengthening it and avoiding division is a religious and national duty. Cohesion with the Islamic Ummah worldwide is also recognized as an Islamic ideal and necessity (Khamenei, Unity Week message, 24/09/1394). Fourth, anti-arrogance and resistance against dominance, which introduces the fight against global arrogance as the permanent policy of the Islamic Revolution and resistance against dominators as a revolutionary and human duty (Khomeini: 13, 427). Fifth, self-confidence and reliance on internal capabilities, which are recognized as the strategy for the country's progress and independence; it considers the effort for self-sufficiency and the interruption of dependency a national and revolutionary necessity for citizens and officials (Khamenei, statements, 14/05/1397). Sixth, preserving the values of the Islamic Revolution, 'Which are a valuable heritage and identity-giving element of Islamic society?' Guarding and institutionalizing them is a religious and revolutionary duty (Khamenei, statements, 03/03/1395). Seventh, hope for the future and effort for progress, which are considered the axis of the Islamic society's movement and a national and religious duty for all (Khamenei, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 8).

Therefore, in the intellectual and political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a desirable political attitude is defined as the behavioral and value compass for citizens in the political and social arena, playing a central role in realizing the ideals of the revolution, preserving and enhancing the system, and advancing the grand goals of the Islamic society. This indigenous attitude is derived from Islamic teachings and values, and its main indicator of desirability is its alignment with Islamic principles, the ideals of the revolution, and the interests of the system.

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Jean Baudrillard's Hyperreality

In the postmodern intellectual system, the concept of "Hyperreality," derived from the ideas of the French philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard, holds a special place. Baudrillard presented this concept to explain the profound transformations resulting from the hegemony of media and new communication technologies in contemporary life. The focal point of his thought is a condition where the boundary between "Reality" and "Representation" has fundamentally collapsed, and representations shape the world of human experience.

According to Baudrillard, today media technologies, by producing models and images of reality that gradually replace reality itself, shape human experience; to the extent that the

media's influence on how we view the world is far beyond short-term effects or minor control, and it transforms worldviews and human life (Giddens, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 66). In this context, media representation is no longer a passive reflection of reality but an active force that self-founding produces and reproduces our perception of reality (Baudrillard, 1993: 185). Thus, hyperreality does not mean the complete destruction of objective reality, but a change in the nature of our perception and experience of it in the media age. Reality is now experienced through media intermediaries and representations, which gain such authority that they decisively shape our perception and even replace reality (Lyotard, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 59).

To explain this transformation, Baudrillard identifies four historical stages in the relationship between reality and representation:

First: "Representation as a reflection of reality," where representations act as a faithful mirror to reality.

Second: "Representation as a distortion of reality," where representation moves away from transparency and changes reality, but a trace of the original reality still exists.

Third: "Representation as a cover for reality," where representation conceals reality and masks its absence.

≠ **Fourth:** "Hyperreality: signs instead of reality," where representation is completely separated from reality and proceeds to create a new, independent reality in which the signs are the original reality itself (Baudrillard, 1993: 185).

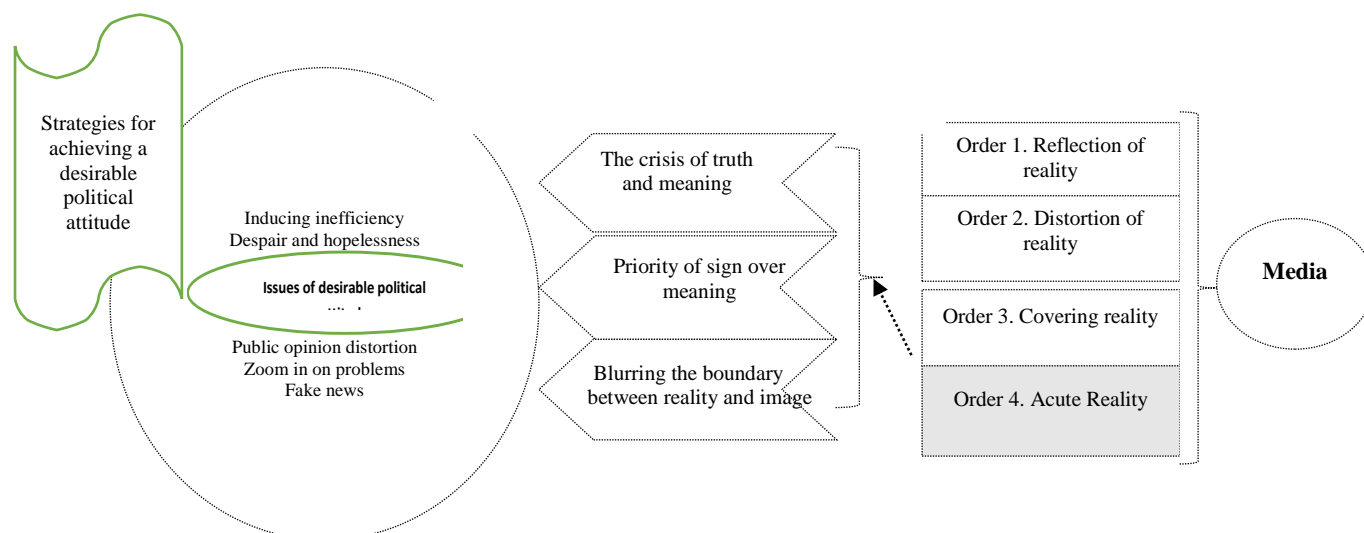
In this unprecedented condition, media signs and images are no longer merely a reflection of external reality but rather they construct and redefine "Reality Itself." More precisely, hyperreality represents a world where media representations and images appear so real, influential, and pervasive that they seem to be an inseparable part of the realities we perceive (Lash, 1990: 38). Baudrillard explicitly states in this regard: "One can no longer speak of representations as if they were a reflection or a reaction to the world; they are the world itself." (Baudrillard, 2001: 45)

By reflecting on the relationship between the phenomenon of "Hyperreality" and the issue of a "Desirable political attitude" in contemporary Iranian society, we find that the context for the formation and widespread activity of hostile Persian-language media networks outside the borders, in alignment with the dominant Western origin of media and information flows in the domestic media sphere, has doubly provided the grounds for the formation and strengthening

of factors that weaken the political attitude in Iranian society. In this process, on the one hand, by selectively and exaggeratedly highlighting existing problems and shortcomings and systematically disregarding the country's tangible progress and achievements, there has been a continuous and purposeful effort to represent an utterly negative and caricatural image of the internal situation of Iran in the minds and consciousness of the Iranian society. On the other hand, these media repeatedly use biased and demeaning comparisons between Iran and developed countries—especially in the crucial areas of economy, society, and politics—to systematically inject and reinforce a "Sense of inefficiency and weakness" among various social strata. This purposeful and continuous media atmosphere gradually leads to the formation of a deep gap between objective and tangible realities and the dominant media representations, and ultimately, it fuels the weakening of a desirable political attitude and the fundamental values of the political system in Iranian society. In such conditions, public belief in the effectiveness and legitimacy of the political system—especially among young and aware generations—is sharply declining, and the country's political and social space is increasingly under the influence of the severe waves of negative media pressure.

From this perspective, given the objective of this article—to gather strategies for recreating a desirable political attitude in the era of hyperreality through interviews with experts—it is necessary that the theoretical basis of these interviews be the identification of strategies that can rebuild social cohesion and repair public trust in the current complex media environment. These interviews must explain the importance of understanding the transformations of the new communication ecosystem and intelligently utilizing media capabilities, and provide sustainable and effective solutions for achieving a desirable political attitude.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Research



3. Methodology

This research, which falls into the category of applied research, was conducted with the aim of identifying policies for realizing a desirable political attitude in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the era of hyperreality. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews; a method that, while answering the main questions, also allows for attention to the dimensions raised by the interviewees (Mirmohammadi & Talaneh, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 168). The statistical population included 12 experts in political science, sociology, and media. The questions were structured based on theoretical foundations in two axes: explaining hyperreality and its consequences, and identifying proposed grand policies. Data analysis was based on the thematic analysis method, which, through stages such as transcription, coding, organizing, and refining themes, led to the extraction of final patterns and their interpretation (Clarke & Braun, 2006: 23).

4. Research Findings

The research findings, titled "Policies for Recreating a Desirable Political Attitude in Today's Iran," are presented below. These findings, which are the result of thematic analysis of expert interviews, are organized in the form of 8 tables (Tables 1 to 8). Each table, to provide a clearer and more focused presentation of the findings, includes three main columns: interview snippets (as examples of the data), basic themes (extracted from the coding process), and the overarching theme (as the final outcome of the analysis in each table). In essence, the structure of each table demonstrates the process of extracting one of the grand policies for realizing a desirable political attitude, from the interview text and basic themes, to reaching the overarching theme. Below each table, a detailed text is provided to explain the themes, dimensions, and various angles of them more precisely.

Table 1. The Policy of the Necessity of Understanding Today's Transformed Iranian World

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	Unfortunately, our officials still do not have a precise understanding of the rapid	Officials' cognitive weakness regarding	The Necessity of Understanding

	impact of new technologies on people's political behavior and attitudes, and this has led to the adoption of ineffective policies that are inconsistent with current conditions.	technological developments and their consequences.	the Bio-Evolved World of Iran Today
2	Traditional definitions of justice and freedom no longer meet the needs and expectations of the young generation in the digital and hyperreal space, and this gap has led to distrust and dissatisfaction. Policymakers must understand this transformation.	The ineffectiveness of traditional definitions of justice and freedom in the digital space.	
3	Officials of official media, with old and incoherent approaches, are unable to counter the scattered and contradictory narratives of social media, and this fuels public confusion, especially in the era of hyperreality.	The lack of coordination of official media in countering social media narratives.	
4	The absence of specialized tools and appropriate technology in policymaking institutions has caused the management and analysis of the complex media space to fail, and distorted narratives have become dominant.	The lack of specialized tools for analyzing and managing the complex media space.	
5	The insufficient mastery of officials and policymakers over the digital space and new media has led to a reduction in the effectiveness of cultural and political policies and an increase in the influence of opposing movements.	Policymakers' inability to effectively utilize the digital space and new media.	

The presented table clarifies the necessity of understanding today's transformed Iranian world. The social, cultural, and technological changes of recent decades have led to a fundamental transformation of Iranian society; transformations that, under the influence of the rapid growth of communication and media technologies, have redefined not only the lifestyle but also the attitudes and interactions of people with the political system. Also, paying attention to the changes in values and norms and the redefinition of fundamental value concepts shows that these transformations are not merely technological and have moved beyond the level of lifestyle change; rather, fundamental values and concepts such as justice, freedom, and political legitimacy have also been redefined in the digital and media context (Ayazi, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 58). Justice is interpreted as equal access to digital services, and freedom is interpreted as active participation in online public discourse. Identity is also redefined under the influence of globalization and the acceptance of diverse values, and political legitimacy is linked to the government's adaptation to new developments.

Consequently, a deep understanding of this transformed world is an essential prerequisite for formulating effective media and cultural policies. To this end, it is necessary to launch systems for monitoring attitudes, media campaigns based on digital justice and freedom, platforms for public participation, training media experts, and formulating indicators for measuring the effectiveness of policies. These actions will help align with developments, strengthen social cohesion and public trust, and pave the way for realizing a desirable political attitude.

Table 2. The Theme of Employing Public Symbols

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	In today's world, where even human identity is in a conflict with media narratives and has become pluralistic and scattered, we must design symbols that can represent all segments of society.	Designing symbols that represent all segments of society.	Designing and employing public symbols.
2	In the era of hyperreality, the government must use symbols and	Using all-encompassing symbols and values in	

	values that are able to cover all social strata in the pluralistic media space.	government.	
3	Public symbols must be able to represent the social, cultural, and religious diversity of society in a balanced way.	Balance and representation of social, cultural, and religious diversity.	
4	Neglecting all-encompassing symbolization strengthens identity gaps and feelings of social exclusion and jeopardizes a desirable political attitude.	The consequences of neglecting all-encompassing symbolization on political attitude.	
5	Public symbols must have visual appeal and inclusivity. These two features can empower the symbols against the currents of hyperreality.	The importance of the inclusivity of symbols in confronting hyperreality.	
6	If we cannot create common symbols that strengthen the sense of belonging among different ethnic groups and communities, the media that seek to create division will exploit this void.	Strengthening the sense of belonging and preventing the exploitation of divisive media.	

Based on the overarching theme of designing and employing public symbols, in the era of hyperreality and alongside rapid social changes and the expansion of new communication technologies, the national identity of Iranians—which has always been multi-faceted, consisting of Islamic, traditional, Iranian, and modern elements and provided a context for social cohesion—is now in a process of diverse and sometimes contradictory media representations. The themes in the table above show that in the space of hyperreality, national identity is no longer static; rather, it is constantly being constructed and reconstructed by the media. This space is highly susceptible to exploitation by hyperreality-creating media, such as hostile media and divisive movements. These media, by focusing on identity gaps and feelings of exclusion and with the power of media representation, destroy public trust, create

dissatisfaction, and intensify social polarization. By constructing their own desirable realities and through biased representations of national symbols or the lack thereof, they play a significant role in creating undesirable political attitudes.

Therefore, in the new conditions, creating symbols that represent the ethnic groups, tastes, and the cultural, social, and religious diversity of Iran has become more necessary than ever. What this research means by public symbols are those symbols that are able to reflect a wide range of tastes and social and cultural diversity in a balanced way and act as a comprehensive mirror. These symbols, by creating a sense of belonging and a shared destiny, are an effective tool for strengthening national cohesion, reducing political polarization, and facilitating the achievement of a desirable political attitude (Barzegar & Tanhaei, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 152).

As a result, the intelligent design and use of public symbols provide an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen national identity and social cohesion in Iran's multicultural society. Practical examples include producing balanced television programs and digital content about different cultures and ethnic groups, holding national festivals focused on local arts and rituals, and creating media campaigns with all-encompassing symbols and slogans to strengthen citizens' sense of belonging and solidarity.

Table 3. The Theme of Intelligent Interaction with New Cultural Authorities

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	Today, in the era of hyperreality, we are witnessing a fundamental change in cultural and political authority. It is no longer just scholars and intellectuals whose words are valued, but artists and athletes have also become very influential in cultural and political arenas.	Transformations in cultural authorities.	Intelligent interaction with new cultural authorities.
2	Utilizing the capacity of new cultural and media authorities is a necessity for political governance in today's societies due to their widespread access to the audience.	The influence of new authorities on public opinion.	

3	Celebrities and new cultural influencers, due to their high capacity to attract an audience, can transmit official messages in a way that is credible and effective in the hyperreal space.	The high capacity of new actors to attract an audience and make official messages credible.	
4	In my opinion, the government and responsible institutions must interact with new authorities in a way that, while utilizing their capacity, also prevents their negative effects.	The necessity of a balanced interaction between the government and new authorities.	
5	The participation of these groups in producing and re-sharing content strengthens social cohesion and public trust in the political goals of the system in the face of hyperreality.	The necessity of intelligent cultural policymaking.	
6	Overall, using new cultural authorities increases the possibility of countering the rapid spread of false narratives and guiding public opinion towards a desirable political attitude in the era of hyperreality.	The role of new cultural authorities in creating a political attitude.	

According to the theme of "Intelligent interaction with new cultural authorities," in the media-driven era of hyperreality and the fundamental transformations in Iran's social structure, we are witnessing a change in the prevailing paradigm of traditional cultural authority. Traditional authorities, who previously included intellectuals and religious elites, have gradually given way to groups such as athletes, cinema and television artists, and singers. These new authorities, due to their widespread influence in the media space and their direct access to a wide range of audiences who are deeply affected by the construction and production of media representations, have gained significant capacity to shape public opinion and form social norms and values (Abbasnejad et al., 2024 AD/1403 SH: 4). In the world of hyperreality, these media figures are not only intensely exposed to the effects of this space

and various media representations and influenced by the formation of its fluid and changing realities but also simultaneously act as creators and builders of reality and social norms. Especially in the process of transmitting political and social values to the young generation, who are deeply engaged with media and virtual spaces, the role of these new authorities has become increasingly prominent. Through the content they produce, their comments, and the lifestyles they display, they actively participate in the construction and reproduction of hyperreality and the shaping of this generation's perceptions and attitudes.

Given the necessity of purposeful interaction with new cultural authorities, which is emphasized in Table 3, it is suggested that coordination committees with celebrities be formed, workshops and consultation sessions be held to train them in responsible content production, and online platforms for their direct participation in cultural projects be created. Also, monitoring mechanisms for the activities of these authorities should be developed. The implementation of these measures will lead to the intelligent utilization of celebrities' capacity, the strengthening of social cohesion and public trust, and the prevention of the deviation of political attitudes.

Table 4. The Theme of the Power of Narrative-Building

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	In today's world, the principle of storytelling and how it is told has become more important than the event itself. The way a narrative is constructed can guide public opinion towards a desirable political attitude.	The importance of narrative-building in today's world.	The power of narrative-building.
2	Narratives, because they act as frameworks that allow society to analyze events and guide its behavior towards specific goals, can resist hyperreality like a strong fortress.	The role of narratives in framing events.	
3	An effective narrative must be both accurate and real, and also be able to	The attractiveness of presenting a	

	connect with people's language. Simply telling the truth is not enough; it must also be attractive. Otherwise, merely stating factual information will not be effective in guiding political attitudes, especially in the era of hyperreality.	narrative.	
4	We are in a war of narratives. If we don't tell our own story correctly and credibly, others will impose their stories on us and will direct our citizens' attitudes, especially their political attitudes, in their favor.	The importance of a correct and credible narrative.	
5	Officials must realize that successful narrative-building can be effective not only in creating and maintaining a desirable political attitude but also in legitimacy, increasing social cohesion, and preserving the authority of the political system.	The positive effect of narrative-building on the system's legitimacy and social cohesion.	

According to the table above, in the media-driven space of Iranian society, where the narrative-building of events is increasingly influenced by transnational actors and social networks, the importance of presenting transparent, convincing, and reality-based narratives is increasing exponentially.

Given the necessity of paying attention to the "features of effective narratives," which is considered one of the main pillars of success in narrative-building in the table, narratives must, in terms of content, be accurate, credible, and consistent with objective realities, and in terms of linguistics and structure, they must have the ability to attract a wide range of audiences. These narratives must not only effectively reflect official viewpoints but also be in harmony and consistent with the objective expectations and needs of society. Especially in a situation where the media landscape, by using emotional representations and deceptive attractions, presents a distorted and caricatural image of official policies and functions and, by

promoting false news and biased analyses, ultimately leads to the weakening of political trust and the spread of social anomie, if official narratives cannot adapt themselves to the new demands of this transformed space, they will fail in the competition of narratives and will be marginalized (Amiri et al., 2024 AD/1403 SH: 4).

To practically utilize the importance of narrative-building in today's media world, government institutions and cultural policymakers must take actions such as publishing accurate and documented narratives of realities, making extensive use of digital platforms and social networks to distribute narratives, and forming specialized media teams to produce attractive and convincing content. Also, holding workshops and training courses for narrative-building experts and media activists in the fields of linguistics, visual design, and audience engagement skills, as well as formulating indicators for measuring the effectiveness of narratives and continuously monitoring audience feedback, should be prioritized.

Table 5. The Theme of Presenting the First Narrative

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	In this world full of diverse news, whoever tells the story first has a greater impact on the audience's mind.	The importance of the first narrative in analyzing events.	Presenting the first narrative of community events.
2	When the first narrative is presented by credible and official sources, it increases public trust in domestic media and helps to stabilize a correct political attitude among the people.	The role of official sources in legitimizing the first narrative.	
3	Timely presentation of the narrative provides an opportunity for public orientations to be shaped positively and prevents the penetration of distorted narratives.	The role of the first narrative in preventing the dominance of distorted narratives.	
4	If we, as domestic media, do not convey the news quickly and correctly, people will turn to foreign media, and they will be the ones	The threat of fake news and its effect on political attitude.	

	who shape the society's mindset.		
5	Not presenting the first narrative and the dominance of foreign media can lead to a reduction in legitimacy and the weakening of a political attitude based on the country's domestic realities.	The effect of the first narrative on the legitimacy of the system.	
6	The initial narrative acts as the basis for subsequent analyses and provides the ground for stabilizing a political attitude based on domestic realities.	The first narrative is the basis for the formation of subsequent analyses.	

Continuing the discussion on the grand policy of the power of narrative-building in the era of hyperreality, the policy of "Presenting the first narrative of community events" has been given priority in the table above. This policy emphasizes the necessity of active and proactive action in the field of narration and the presentation of timely, accurate, and documented narratives of events in the competitive space of hyperreality.

When a narrative is published for the first time by official and trusted domestic sources, it creates a strong barrier against the penetration of counter-narratives and biased discourses. The rapid drafting of the first narrative by domestic media makes it possible to actively guide the cognitive space of society towards the desired narrative and prevent the flood of distorted and falsified narratives in the hyperreal space. In contrast, hesitation and delay in presenting the first narrative by domestic sources create a dangerous information vacuum that inevitably drives the audience toward foreign media. This paves the way for the rampant spread of fake news, parallel narratives, and the distortion of reality, which severely undermines the foundations of a desirable political attitude and threatens the legitimacy of the political system.

The neglect of this vital matter in Iran's media space has allowed hostile media to repeatedly exploit this strategic weakness and, with biased and tendentious representations of the country's conditions, hold public opinion hostage. The attractive and emotional narratives of foreign media, which are in tune with the emotions and momentary desires of the Iranian

audience, by presenting selective and tendentious representations of reality, cast a heavy shadow over official narratives and weaken their authority (Ismaili, 2022 AD/1401 SH).

Finally, to achieve this goal, government institutions and cultural policymakers must create specialized media teams to produce accurate, documented, and timely narratives. Digital platforms and social networks should be actively used for the immediate publication of the first narrative. Also, holding workshops and training courses for journalists and media activists in the skills of rapid narrative-building, data analysis, and audience persuasion is essential.

Table 6. The Theme of Adopting a Balanced and Realistic Media Perspective

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	If our media only talk about successes and ignore people's problems, people will feel they are being lied to and will lose their trust.	The inverse effect of an idealist approach.	Adopting a balanced and realistic media perspective.
2	We must show the realities of society as they are; we must both talk about our strengths and bravely admit our weaknesses. This honesty is the key to gaining people's trust.	The consistency of the media approach with social realities.	
3	When media only present an ideal and unrealistic image of society, people turn to other media to find reality, and this is dangerous in today's era of hyperreality.	The public's reliance on hostile media due to the unbalanced approaches of state-affiliated media.	
4	State-affiliated media must, while reflecting tangible successes in various fields alongside existing challenges and problems create a compassionate and balanced atmosphere in society.	Simultaneously reflecting successes and problems.	
5	Media must show their credibility and	Confronting the	

	honesty by observing realism and a balanced representation of achievements and problems.	social atmosphere of despair and distrust.	
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According to the concept of adopting a balanced and realistic media perspective, which is emphasized as a key policy in the table above, in the era of hyperreality, although at first glance the exclusive focus of official and government-affiliated media in Iran on representing the achievements and strengths of the political system might seemingly lead to improved attitudes and assessments by citizens, this selective approach, when it ignores the bitter realities of society and refuses to bravely admit existing shortcomings, quickly becomes a destructive factor in the hyperreal space and leads to severe consequences.

In reality, this obvious inconsistency between the image presented by state-affiliated media and the tangible realities of people's lives not only fails to create hope and social cohesion but spreads the seeds of despair and distrust in society. This is because in such an environment, the media, which were supposed to be the architects of a desirable political attitude, become tools in the hands of those accused of lying and distorting reality and, unintentionally, reinforce destructive elements in the fabric of society's political attitude (Khalilzadeh, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 37). The continuation of this situation not only reduces public trust in official media but also challenges the legitimacy of the government's narrative of reality. A vivid example of this claim is the current situation in Iran, where state-affiliated media and their managers, by disregarding bitter realities and political, economic, and cultural failures and presenting a caricatural and one-dimensional image of society's conditions, have dragged political attitudes into a quagmire of distrust and despair. Practical measures in this regard include holding specialized workshops and training courses for journalists and media activists on realistic narrative-building, training in the skills of producing accurate and documented content, data analysis, and audience persuasion skills.

Table 7. The Theme of Synergistic and Frontal Activity

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	In today's media space, if the messages and actions of different institutions are not	Audience confusion in the absence of	The necessity of coordinated,

	coordinated, the audience becomes confused, and the field of narrative-building is practically handed over to media competitors.	coordination.	synergistic, and frontal activity.
2	Individual or isolated activities, even if they are correct, have a limited impact against organized media movements.	The limited impact of isolated actions.	
3	We should not have a single, soulless voice, but rather we should be a unified media front that, while having diverse voices, all move in one direction.	The necessity of creating a unified front with diverse voices.	
4	The lack of coordination in media policymaking sometimes causes the actions of one institution to practically neutralize or weaken the message of another institution.	The neutralization of messages due to a lack of coordination.	
5	For example, large media outlets should determine the main framework of the messages, and other media should retell them in a simpler and more attractive way for different audiences. This is how we can succeed in this complex media space.	Determining the main framework and retelling messages attractively.	
6	When institutions follow a common roadmap, even heavy media attacks cannot destroy the coherence of the message.	Maintaining message coherence with a common roadmap.	

The policy of the "Necessity of coordinated, synergistic, and frontal activity" as the seventh central theme of this research is considered an essential prerequisite for realizing a desirable political attitude in the era of hyperreality. Unfortunately, in Iran, a desirable level of coordination and cohesion among various media outlets, both official and unofficial, is not observed as it should be. Most media outlets operate separately and without a common strategy in transmitting messages. This lack of cohesion not only leads to audience confusion

in the face of different media representations but also weakens the position of the official discourse and reduces the effectiveness of the narratives presented by the political system. Therefore, in the current media space, achieving a desirable political attitude requires a more coordinated and integrated approach among different media outlets than ever before. This strategic coordination acts not only as a means to repair public trust and realize a desirable political attitude but also as a powerful lever for strengthening declining social capital and building positive and constructive discourses in the era of hyperreality (Bostanpira et al., 2024 AD/1403 SH: 91).

In this regard, each media outlet must take on a specific role. For example, large and official media outlets can be responsible for the main task of "Grand narrative-building" and "Narrative framing" of fundamental and grand messages, while social networks and digital media can expand the scope of their influence among audiences by representing these messages in a simpler language and in more attractive formats. It is only through this type of collaboration and coordination that it is possible to overcome the challenges of contradictory media representations in the era of hyperreality and strive to build a desirable political reality.

Table 8. The Theme of Institutionalizing Responsible Behavior in the Media Society

Row	Sample Interview Snippets	Basic Themes	Overarching Theme
1	In conditions of hyperreality, merely taking correct actions is not enough; rather, it is necessary that these actions be represented in a professional manner consistent with the rules of media communication to prevent the distortion and substitution of narratives.	Representing correct actions in a way that is consistent with the conditions of hyperreality.	The necessity of institutionalizing responsible behavior in the media society.
2	Creating clear and binding behavioral protocols for officials can minimize the scope of exploitation of mistakes by opposing media.	Creating clear and binding behavioral protocols.	
3	The absence of a clear educational system and behavioral frameworks for officials provides the ground for scattered and	The behavioral and verbal integrity of officials.	

	uncoordinated behaviors to emerge, which can be represented in the media as a sign of institutional disorder and incoherence.		
4	Part of the media crises originates from minor behavioral or verbal errors that, if there were sufficient awareness and sensitivity, would not have reached the media level in the first place.	Countering the exploitation of hostile media.	
5	The institutionalization of responsible behavior must be considered a stable norm and an organizational culture, not just a temporary reaction to crises, because in the era of hyperreality, the possibility of media issues arising on a daily basis exists.	Institutionalizing continuous and daily responsible behavior.	

The overarching theme of the necessity of institutionalizing responsible behavior in the media society refers to the behavioral requirements and necessities for officials. In today's societies, where media are considered the watchful eyes of society, the attempt to conceal the performance and even the statements of officials from public opinion has become almost impossible. In this era, every slip-up or improper behavior by officials quickly becomes the focus of public attention and turns into a hot topic for media representation. The importance of this reality is doubled in Iran's challenging media landscape, where opposing media are constantly seeking to distort the fabric of a desirable political attitude. As has happened many times, a small mistake, immature comments, or any irresponsible behavior or word can turn into an opportunity and an excuse for opposing media to use its media representation to fuel a wave of public distrust toward government institutions and the ruling system and to confront the grounds for legitimacy with serious doubts.

This situation causes the wrong actions and behaviors of officials, especially in areas such as financial corruption, nepotism, abuse of power, or overt and covert violations of laws, to be quickly revealed and attract public opinion. These cases become the main material for negative narratives and, consequently, the creation of undesirable realities in the arena of public opinion.

Therefore, understanding the role of media in the era of hyperreality and its effect on constructing realities through representation, along with awareness of the dangers of this process and promoting appropriate behaviors and positive models, is a necessity for preserving a desirable political attitude and the legitimacy of the government (Mahooshi, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 49). Institutionalizing responsible behavior through the formulation and implementation of transparency and accountability guidelines, continuous training in professional and media ethics, the creation of systems for monitoring and publicizing performance reports, and the design of rapid response protocols for errors strengthens public trust and provides the ground for realizing a desirable political attitude and preserving the government's legitimacy in the era of hyperreality.

Conclusion

In summary, the present research, by analyzing the various dimensions of the phenomenon of hyperreality in Iran's media-driven society, reached the central conclusion that realizing a desirable political attitude in this era requires a paradigm shift in media and cultural policymaking approaches. It is no longer possible to guide public opinion and create the desired political attitude in the hyperreal space by relying on traditional methods based on one-way information dissemination. The era of hyperreality is an era of the war of narratives and the competition for reality, and victory in this field requires a deep understanding of the media mechanisms for constructing reality and their strategic application.

The research findings revealed eight main axes as the fundamental requirements for policymaking in the era of hyperreality: First, a deep understanding of the transformation of the world and the essential difference between today's society and the past; second, the intelligent design and application of public symbols that reflect the diversity and pluralism of Iranian society in the hyperreal space; third, a purposeful and nuanced interaction with new cultural authorities and influential media figures, with a compassionate approach. Fourth, gaining the skill and ability in narrative-building that is attractive, credible, and consistent with the hyperreal space and the fundamental values of society; fifth, prioritizing the presentation of the first narrative of events as the key to dominating the space of collective perception and preventing the formation of rival narratives; sixth, emphasizing honesty, transparency, and avoiding one-sided and unrealistic approaches in representing achievements and challenges, in order to repair and strengthen public trust; seventh, creating a coordinated

and synergistic front among like-minded media outlets, with an emphasis on diversity within unity and avoiding a single and monotonous voice; eighth, the practical commitment of officials to accountability, transparency, and behavioral integrity.

Ultimately, it can be stated that recreating a desirable political attitude in the Iranian society of the hyperreality era requires a firm resolve, intelligent prudence, and a transformative approach in the realm of media and cultural policymaking. It is hoped that the results of this research will take a small step in realizing this important matter and will illuminate the path for policymakers and those in charge in this critical journey.

Research Limitations

Despite the effort to provide a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of hyperreality in Iran's media-driven society, this research faced limitations whose nature is mostly related to the characteristics of the topic and the research conditions. One of the limitations was the conservative responses of some interviewees, which reflected the sensitivity of the topic and the need to adhere to institutional frameworks and limited access to some details. Also, there were few previous sources and studies that had directly examined hyperreality in the political arena, which limited the possibility of drawing on the research context and comparing the results, a matter that is inherently related to the nascent topic and rapid media developments. These limitations, at the same time, add to the value and necessity of the research and show the innovative position of the research in examining a less-studied phenomenon.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is suggested that future research be conducted with a more detailed focus on specific dimensions of this topic; including investigating the role of public symbols in political-cultural identity, the design and function of media symbols in a pluralistic society, the interaction of official institutions with cultural authorities and influential figures, the role of transparency in strengthening public trust, the management of a diverse yet coordinated media front, how to create strategic unity among media outlets, and the use of the experience of countries that have successfully dealt with the phenomenon of hyperreality.

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