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## MEDIA IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND PUBLIC OPINION: CASE STUDY OF BAN OF VISAS FOR SEVEN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

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### ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the impact of media and its impact on political relations of countries in situations where the decisions of high-ranking officials are in contradiction with public opinion, the principles, and democracy standards of the country. As a case study, it addresses western and American media outlets in reflecting the news of the cancellation of the visa for seven Muslim countries. From the study hypothesis, western media, with a broad reflection of public opinion, increase the effect of public diplomacy on international relations in diplomacy contrary to the underlying principles of democratic countries. A descriptive survey has been used to achieve the goals. The study statistical population consisted of Tehran's journalists. Using Krejcie and Morgan table, 292 subjects were selected as the statistical sample. Research finding indicates that 28.7% of Tehran's journalists believe that most Western media objected to Trump's decree to cancel the visa for seven Muslim countries because they were opposed to the president from the beginning of elections. In addition, 28.7% believe that the Western media's opposition to this decree because it was contrary to American democratic identity. The one-sample t-test result showed that reasons for Western media outcry with US presidential decree on visa ban for seven Muslim countries from Tehranian journalists' point of view include the variables of opposition to Trump's policy because of opposition to its presidency, Trump's contradiction with American democratic identity, Trump's contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations, Trump's contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States, and Trump's contradiction with America's past policies. According to the Friedman's test result, "opposition to Trump's policy because of opposition to its presidency" has a higher average score (3.86) compared to other indicators in terms of capability and impact. Similarly, other indicators are ranked next.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The wider emergence of international media, especially digital, in the last two decades of the twentieth century has created a new atmosphere in the world where the power of the people, culture, the media, and the message has reduced the role of the military and the armed forces of the countries and, to a lesser extent, has affected diplomatic decisions. This has caused, in today's world, relations between nations to play a greater role than the relations between governments in political and international decisions because the message has come from the national, individual and local to the international and global stage. For this reason, relations between countries are not determined solely by the sovereignty, but by a set of governments, public opinion and communication information technologies, they form the international relations equations so that the media has an important role in influencing these relationships by applying techniques (Sadati, 2014). After the Gulf War in the early 1990s, a new media concept emerged and tried to explain the phenomenon of 24-hour television of global coverage (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Today, we should not just talk about the explosion of information, the communications revolution, and media influences on the formation of world public opinion. Therefore, the development of massive communication technologies seems to be normal. In addition to computer networks, satellites, news agencies and various radio and television stations, speed of the exchange of information and the transmission of the message of intellectual leaders among the various strata of the people, and its reflection as a form of public opinion in the politics of countries has challenged many of the pre-existing assumptions and principles in the structure of international relations and law. The political and legal boundaries of governments are diminished, their sovereignty as the most important actors in the global arena faces serious challenges, and policies are in line with public diplomacy only if policies are based on national and cultural identity, national interests, and democracy. For this reason, the media have an important role in public opinion, according to the position they have found, in various political, social, cultural, economic aspects. However, the government's continued domination over the media and news agencies has provided them with tremendous and enormous power so that they have been able to modify and direct collective beliefs and attitudes to redefine internal or external public opinion using news and information levers. Many scholars (from Third World Politicians to Western thinkers such as Herbert Schiller and Jeremy Tannstal and the Finnish Carl Niederling) agree that news media of the world are still under the direct influence of the main Western news agency (Smith, 1985: 87).

According to the assumption in this research, western media, with a broad reflection of public opinion, increase the effect of public diplomacy on international relations in diplomacy contrary to the underlying principles of democratic countries. In addition, the opposition of the media since the Tramp's presidential nomination has led the media to take the role of public diplomacy on international relations to show opposition to the decree of abolishing the visas for citizens of Muslim countries. With descriptive and analytical survey, this article seeks to provide a presentation on the role of the media in interacting with public opinion and the diplomacy system in a situation in which one faces with the development of social networks and the increasing role of relations among nations along with the relations of states. This issue has been analyzed with a focus on explaining the status of Western media about the US government's decision on the visa for seven Muslim countries, as contradicting Western media outlets for free and democratic representation of the United States.

In recent years, we have faced a new approach to Western media, which has been affected by the increasing growth of social networks. With the arrival of President Donald Trump, most of the country's media broke the tradition and they were critical of the US election from the beginning. This issue was more likely to be rooted in media diplomacy; it might be claimed that the independent media perspective in analyzing his campaign slogans and comparing it with the traditional US government approach has concluded that Donald Trump as President violates Western media diplomacy and public opinion. It seemed that media outreach was based on the common discourse of media and intellectual leaders while the approach of the new US government is contrary to the traditional principles of the United States. After the government began to work and ordered the cancellation of the visas of seven Muslim countries, we witnessed more publicity and media coverage, as media coverage was reflected in the widespread reflection of public opinion's protests. Perhaps, the most important reason for the proximity of the media and public opinion maybe begin with increasing the role of social networks and the greater influence of intellectual leaders on public diplomacy. Moreover, the mandate of Tramp for the abolition of the visa for seven Muslim countries questioned the democratic principles and human rights of the United States based on the country's basic policies.

Despite the claim that the press and major news agencies are private, Western information and dissemination of important news are in monopoly and control of governments. A clear example in this regard is the Gulf War, in which where the flow of news and information was explicitly controlled and monitored by Western governments, and in particular by the United States, for a relatively long time and severe censorship has dominated; many western thinkers have expressed their distrust of the news agency and media of the Western world (Toffler, 1996: 223). The famous Western thinker Walter Lippmann believes that the visuals that the mass media offer are often fake and misleading (Lippmann, 1997). Media diplomacy in a country can affect not only the political and national security equilibrium but also the security of the region. Hence, news agencies like the New York Times say the influence of social media on its users and audience has grown to a degree that needs to be taken seriously and should take this media as a key tool for communication and access to the audience (Parr, 2009). All these discussions have changed with the expansion of social networks that can be considered as individual media phenomena. This has even changed the way media works; so when Tramp's government encountered media opposition, they turned to the same personal media, social networks, and used Twitter to spread its oversight to some extent to undermine media diplomacy.

Media diplomacy has emerged as one of the main branches of the diplomatic and foreign policy activities and it has constituted a significant part of the public diplomacy of particularly powerful nations in the world. While others do not believe in the impact of media on foreign policy decisions. They argue that there is no solid evidence of the impact of mass media on foreign policy decisions and decision-makers rarely change their decisions for the sake of the media. However, they may have to react because of the media. In general, media diplomacy can be defined as using the media to achieve diplomatic goals, securing benefits, completing and promoting foreign policy (Ashena, 2005).

The result of western media diplomacy against the policy of banning visa from seven Muslim

countries does not rule out this issue because the US government changed its idea in response to the opposition of the American NGOs and media against American international politics. The US government reacted to public diplomacy protests with a little change in its provisions and the removal of the name of Iraq from the list of Iran, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, and Somalia as well as adding a condition to the Syrian immigrants indirectly. Nevertheless, this behavior ultimately suggests that diplomacy still insists on implementing its policies and resists media diplomacy as far as it goes.

## 2. COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS OF MEDIA

Perhaps it is very easy to say, “Every tool that conveys a message is a media” although simplification is a principle and shows all aspects of the media. Thus, radio and television, books, cinema, and even the Internet are defined as media. The media's impact on the adaptation of public opinion and politics is forgotten in this definition. Accordingly, one can define media as a dynamic existence in the communication process

Information and communication systems have been divided into three main categories in terms of information transfer practices, namely:

- Single centered system
- Multi-centered system
- Global system

These systems, with the continuity of their internal process, seek independence from other systems; henceforth, they are defined as follows:

**Single centered system:** This one-way system, from top to bottom, involves inequalities in social relations between social institutions because it believes that the flow of information must be controlled and shaped by the owners of power (Becker, 1973).

**Multi-centered system:** This multi-level communication system has come to fruition in recent years due to the advent of information and communication technology as well as the spread of this knowledge. Some of the factors that created this system are abundant awareness of local communities, social movements of minorities or sub-groups of the general system of society, familiarity with social rights and awareness of the capabilities of the mass media in shaping their desires, and attaining their goals.

**Global system:** This system has been created by the popularity of the media. In fact, in this system, all groups and classes have the ability to produce media content and easily publish their own culture, values, experiences, and lifestyles in the national and even regional and global arenas. This tendency has become more intense, especially in the case of newer media that is affected by the massive expansion of information and communication technology. Information and communication systems can be rapidly and up-to-date through information resources (satellites, databases, etc.) (Farhangi, 1991).

In short, the new international environment has the following characteristics

The existence of "countries-nations" relations with less authority, with the exception of a few great powers (although they need to justify public opinion for their domestic and international behavior, but there are other actors on the international stage in addition to countries; it includes

nongovernmental organizations, the media, and virtual powers with network identity; hard power and soft power (both will be the basis of the survival of countries and the leverage that determines the interactions among them); traditional diplomacy (it is still the circuit of communication among countries but the need for communication with unrestricted actors provides the context for the adoption of "media diplomacy").

Joseph Nye, one of the Harvard professors as the originator of the term soft power, like Gramsci, who introduced the term influence, believes that soft power means the influence and attractiveness of the ideas of a nation on other nations. The soft power of a nation enables it to achieve its desired results in international affairs, not by force and power, but by the power of attraction.

**International relations:** It is the study of all exchanges, transactions, contacts, information flows and their reactions among the separated "countries" and their constituent parts. The area of international relations knowledge is vast and broad. As it is clear from the above definition, all affairs and interaction among political units (governments), international organizations, and non-governmental organizations are in the field of study of this science (Ghaderi, 2000: 57-73).

**Information in social media:** Social media is increasingly being used to reflect ideas and tools for sharing information among communities. Social networks are considered as social media, and the news is spreading much faster, more widely, and more effectively through community segregation with communities of interest and tastes. This information sharing seems at first glance to have a significant impact on the empowerment of human societies (Twitter Privacy Policy, 2009). Until recently, soft power was considered an American weapon; Joseph Nye believes that the victory of the Americans in the Cold War with the Eastern bloc was as much owed to Radio Free Europe and Hollywood productions as the product of the Reagan Star Wars' program. In fact, soft power is a demanding security approach that aims to attract global attention to new challenges and it acts by adoption of international standards, institutions, coalitions, and innovative cooperation in foreign relations among countries as well as non-governmental organizations. Today, in international relations, knowledge and the way to organize and use it in advancing national interests are called "soft power."

**International propaganda:** Propaganda is the publication of thoughts or positions that affect behavior, thoughts, or both. Regardless of the nationality of people who carry out propaganda activities, international propaganda passes global boundaries, ie, institutions or individuals from a given government to promote propaganda to residents of another country. International propaganda is considered as one of the means of communication, recognition, and international confidence.

**Political Communication:** Without communication with citizens, no government can operate its organizational components at the central and local levels as well as in other countries. In the field of governance, an element of communication has a sensitive and decisive contribution. To form part of the country's communications with political units, governing bodies in the countries of the world have been forced to create vast organizations and institutions such as embassies. The effects of global communication in international relations are twofold. First, global communications are helping to empower margins and peripherals and provide them with global talks. In fact, global communication has made it possible to strengthen some of the forgotten voices and groups that have been attacked

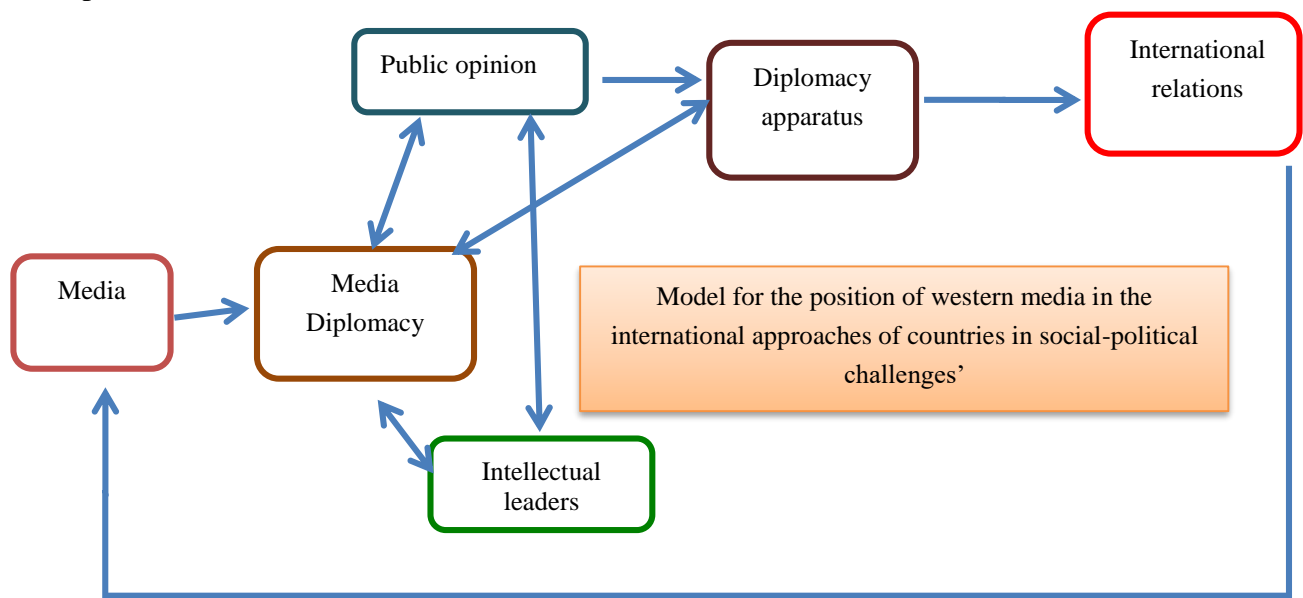
by traditional cultural, political, and economic systems. Second, global communication causes theoretical convergence and by this type of communication, international leaders focus on issues such as exploitation, development and population, nuclear weapons and the environment, human rights, and women's status (Rogers, 1994).

In order to explain more precisely the effects of contemporary world media, they can be examined in several areas:

**Diplomacy:** Global communication has led to three types of diplomacy: public diplomacy, popular diplomacy, real diplomacy. Today, the base of diplomacy has moved from political power toward political mentality. Public diplomacy means, "Activities outside the borders in the fields of information, education, and culture, and its purpose is to influence the foreign government with an impact on its citizens"(Fredic, 1993). General diplomacy is an assistant for traditional diplomacy and it has created a kind of coexistence among the government, the media, and foreign affairs. The government can intervene in accessing the media, the media can play a role in foreign policy, and it will transfer diplomacy from one country to another; as the CNN played an important role in public diplomacy in the Gulf War.

Liberal media have been leaders in promoting the freedom of expression and belief in the world over the past century. During this period, many governments and personalities by these media have been considered enemies of human freedom or against human rights. Since the 1940s and after World War II, the same press and the liberal media have come across contradictions that are not consistent with the foundations of liberalism. Freedom claimers seem to have fallen into the open.

In the past, there was no such thing as "international relations" that limited the power of countries, but relations among people, governments, and powers changed as a result of transformation within these powers.



**Figure 1:** Roles of media and diplomacy linking with international relations.

People, with access to social networks, express themselves directly against the policies of the diplomatic system, and their reflection in the mass media plays a role in public diplomacy in international politics, see Figure 1. This suggests that the message of public opinion is effective only

through the reflection in the international media in the context of the political and international relations of the state, although it is transmitted directly to the diplomatic apparatus. We witnessed this effect during the decision of the US government of Visa ban for 7 Muslim countries so that Donald Trump was seeking to neutralize the media's impact on countering media diplomacy through the same social network, Twitter, as his political issues. On the other hand, he was seeking two-way interactions with the people.

## 2.1 INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON FOREIGN POLICY

Most studies on the subject of media engagement - foreign policy usually focus on power issues precisely. Therefore, the influence of media is often measured by the scale of dispersion between the lowest possible point ("manufacture of consent " of Lippmann, where the medium is nothing but a tool of government) and the highest point ("the CNN impact" where the medium is thought to have hegemonic characteristics (Yodanova, 2012). Hence, it should be noted that theories on the impact of media on foreign policy have evolved in two main directions. First, these theories have changed the position from believing in the great effect of the media on audiences to limited effects. Second, they have pointed to the audience's active role to receive and interpret media messages instead of perceiving the respondent as passive. In political communication, in addition to accepting these two points, they have developed a theoretical perspective to explain the relationship between news media and politics.

The media also have an enormous impact on the international relations of the countries, and sometimes this role is so high that it leads to the proximity, intercourse, or even the hostility of countries. For example, Iran-US relations, although they have always been in a state of conflict and aggression nearly 30 years since the Islamic Revolution. After the end of the Cold War, and especially over the past decade, these relations have been accompanied by the international presence of the United States in the Middle East. The continuation of these policies ended with US-Iran confrontations in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, etc. In this situation, reflecting reports of ballistic missile testing and unilateral analyzes to link it to "The *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*" and its violation, media such as the Wall Street Journal and Fox News provided space for Americans to put Iran's name on the list of seven countries to ban visas. This is citizenship and civil behavior, rather than a diplomatic action although it is in contradiction to democratic principles of America that have been promoting in the Western media for many years. Thus, civil organizations and public opinion opposed it. However, media aid also failed to change the decision of the president of the United States; only, judiciary in different states suspended this order.

In the theory of CNN Impact, media have played the role of the government's political propaganda tool. This theory believes that the news media can shake the government in times of catastrophic events and humanitarian crises, and move towards intervention in these crises. For example, the news coverage of the suppression of students' protest at Beijing's Tian An May Square by CNN in 1989 confirms this theory. The media play the role of justifying the government in foreign policy realm by defending foreign policy and valuing, inducing the message and highlighting the legitimacy of government policies, and conveying messages from diplomacy officials to global public opinion. In this role, they propagate ideologies and ideas of the foreign policy of countries for the

promotion of culture, ideas, and opinions. In this regard, CNN Impact theory can be inspired by some sort of amazing innovation in news production. The foundation for this hypothesis is well described by Livingstone (1997) who states that CNN's impact has at least three dimensions. First, media accelerates the policy process and creates real diplomacy. Second, the media becomes an obstacle to achieving specific policy goals by stimulating an emotional, irrational, and impersonal response among people toward a genuine policy decision. Third, media is an agency producing guidelines. The term "CNN Impact" implies that mainstream media in general, not just CNN, have an impact on foreign policy formulation. Nowadays, although Iraq and Afghanistan are overwhelmed by conflicts, the role of the media in influencing diplomacy as political responses is significant (Robinson, 2013).

In general, media influences on international relations and foreign policy in democratic societies depend on the surrounding environment. Tehranian defines this condition in the best words as, the influence of the media can be neither powerful nor powerless, but power-related (Tehranian, 1997).

### **3. THE IMPACT OF POLITICS ON MEDIA**

The basic foundations for explaining the effect of politics on the media can clarify the aspects of this impact; each one will be discussed here:

#### **3.1 THE THEORY OF MANUFACTURE OF AGREEMENT**

In this theory, the news media, instead of influencing politics or criticizing the power sector, arranges their coverage to attract audiences (the masses) for political decisions. For example, US news coverage during critical periods of the war in Syria and Yemen was not only a matter of criticizing official government policies but of manufacture of agreement for that policy.

#### **3.2 THE THEORY OF MANUFACTURE OF THE AGREEMENT FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICIALS**

This theory reflects how the news media behave in their news coverage to support the decisions of the country's executive authorities. If the incident does not concern the executive authorities of the country, it will be dealt in another way. For example, the coverage of the news of the killing of the Iraqi people was limited in the US media because the policy of US officials played a significant role in the events.

#### **3.3 THE THEORY OF MANUFACTURE OF THE AGREEMENT FOR INTELLECTUAL LEADERS**

According to this theory, the two terms in the manufacture of agreement theory should be executed and moderated.

- The news media does not only endorse manufacture of the agreement for the country's executive officials but also for intellectual leaders including national officials and national figures.
- Under certain conditions, the media not only do not deal with the manufacture of agreement, they also take on critical issues.

Another hypothesis available for relations of media - foreign policy is the theory of "manufacture of consent" by Walter Lippmann. In this view, the media not only convey the message of the dominant



political elite, they are nothing but instruments of power, and thus confirm the status quo.

### 3.4 MEDIA AND POWER INTERACTIVE THEORY

The theory believes that there should be a two-way stream between the coverage of news media and political power. In fact, the manufacture of agreement theory is unilateral and does not focus on the interaction and the reciprocal relationship between news media and politics. However, this effect is not entirely passive, since media work is not just a reflection of the events; but the truth is that media, with an influential effect on one side, rebuild reality and presents it their audience through a formidable format (Salehi Amiri, 2008). In the process of retrieval, the news of the events is influenced by the media attitude. However, with regard to the reflection of the news of visa ban for 7 Muslim countries, Western media act more than two ways of producing the agreement for intellectual leaders and people; it is an instance of passive action in front of government, national identity, and democracy so as to stable the general policies of the country, as noted by Holsti (2004) about international relations that people change but interests and policies do not change.

Daniel C. Hallin, the author of “*The uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*” and his colleague Lance Bennett, believe that if the media have an impact on the foreign policy process, it is insignificant. Their reputation is due to their implications for the “attached” media coverage. When the political elite is in a state of consensus about a particular strategy or political decision, the content of the media is in line with the general view. If there is a contradiction, the media tends to get the opposition side (Yodanova, 2012).

According to Robinson, the media tends to have the first two areas, meaning that journalists will either be in agreement with the elite or cover the official debate such as legal opposing views; but they are never diverted from accepted political principles and concepts. Therefore, they cannot be agents of political and social innovation (Robinson, 2001). Robinson does not think the media will ever have an independent impact on the foreign policy process.

## 4. THE ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN POLITICS

The impact of media on public opinion has faced challenges with the growth of social networks; moreover, the extent to which they can act in line with popular diplomacy can follow the theory of the two-stage flow of communication that plays the role of intellectual leaders (Lazarsfeld & Kat, 1999). Media messages are first filtered by the intellectual leaders and then they reach the crowd. Therefore, intellectual leaders play a decisive role in communicating in contradictory policies. According to the concept of cognitive coordination, messages that are consistent with the previous audience’s understanding are much easier to accept so that new information contradicts the audience’s intuitive thoughts. Hence, the media message will have a variety of effects. For example, as much as the audience has higher education, he will be more critical of the media message. Ultimately, the audience's access to alternative sources is also decisive in this regard (Jackob, 2010: 589). People will be less dependent on media if they have access to alternative sources.

Among the various instruments of latent diplomacy, media diplomacy is more important in psychological operations due to its dual role. In other words, media diplomacy has two inherent elements:

1. Diplomacy is one of the practical political pressures.
2. The media sector is the main psychological propaganda tool in psychological operations.

The goals of media diplomacy in transnational psychological operations are applying the political, cultural, and military pressures of other countries against the target country, creating a willingness and interest in the country's target audience towards the brokerage country, and legitimizing and justifying the actions and behaviors of psychological operations and media diplomacy. The media are the most important tool in this field to achieve these goals. Each media can have a particular performance, depending on the type of target. Therefore, in explaining the type of media in media diplomacy, in the first phase, it should include the tags of psychological operations. The tag of governance in media diplomacy is a bit more sensitive and difficult because the sovereigns have more information and awareness than citizens and other marks and they are less influenced by common practices. Accordingly, psychological operations brokers use more sophisticated tools and tricks for these tags. For these two tags, media diplomacy agents use global news agencies and TV news channels, including four news agencies Reuters, Frances Press, Associated Press and United News, and Fox News, CNN, BBC and Euronews on global television networks. As the elite media, any news and information broadcasted by these news agencies and news networks will be used by all the world's media even target country as important news.

## 5. RESEARCH METHOD

Since the present paper attempts to address the status of media in the conflict between international diplomacy and public opinion, this research can be considered as an applied research type in terms of research purpose. Another criterion is the categorization of research is data collection method. According to this feature, the present study can be considered as descriptive-survey research using a questionnaire tool. The statistical population of the study consisted of all the journalists in Tehran with 1000 people. Using Krejcie and Morgan table, 292 subjects were selected as the statistical sample. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to survey and measure the variables of the research. Validity of the questionnaire based on content validity of Lowsheh for variables of “opposition to Tramp’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”, “Tramp’s contradiction with American democratic identity”, “Tramp’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”, “Tramp’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”, and “Tramp’s contradiction with America’s past policies” are 0.72, 0.70, 0.82, 0.71, and 0.79, respectively. In addition, Cronbach's alpha is used to test the reliability of the research tool, the calculated alpha for the research variables are presented in the table below.

**Table 1:** Reliability of Research Tool.

Row	Variable	Alpha
1	“ opposition to Tramp’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”	0.85
2	“ Tramp’s contradiction with American democratic identity”	0.89
3	“ Tramp’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”	0.78
4	“ Tramp’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”	0.80
5	“ Tramp’s contradiction with America’s past policies”	0.90

As indicated in Table 1, the research questionnaire has an acceptable reliability and the calculated alpha for the variables of “opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”, “Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”, “Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”, “Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”, and “Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies” are 0.85, 0.89, 0.78, 0.80, and 0.90, respectively. It indicates the reliability of the research questionnaire. The data were analyzed by SPSS-23 software after entering the computer. Then, distribution of the absolute and relative abundance of the groups was determined and data were analyzed using t-test.

## 6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings of the demographic variables of the research are included in Table 2. Findings show that 64.4% of respondents are men and 35.96% of respondents are women. Regarding the frequency distribution of respondents according to the age variable, the findings of the research indicated that 17.12% of respondents aged 25 to 31 years old, 33.21% were between the ages of 31 and 35, 22.26% at the age of 36 to 40, and 39.40% were over the age of 41 years.

**Table 2:** Demographic Research Findings

Variables	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Gender		
Male	187	64.04%
Female	105	35.96%
Age		
25-31	50	17.12%
31-35	97	33.21%
36-40	65	22.26%
41 and higher	80	27.39%

Descriptive research variables are “opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”, “Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”, “Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”, “Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”, and “Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies”; they are represented in the following table.

**Table 3.** Reasons for Western media’s opposition with the US presidential decree on the visa ban for seven Muslim countries from the perspectives of Tehranian journalists

Row	Variable	Frequency	Percent
1	“opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”	84	28.7
2	“Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”	84	28.7
3	“Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”	40	13.6
4	“Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”	48	16.4
5	“Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies”	36	12.3
	Total	292	100

According to the survey, a sample of 292 journalists from Tehran and a statistical society of 1000 targets, 84 journalists in Tehran, which comprise 28.7% of the statistical population, believe that most

western media protest to Trump’s order on the ban of visa for 7 Muslim countries because of their opposition to his presidency. The same number of journalists in the city of Tehran believes that western media protest this order because it is in contradiction with American democratic identity. 48 journalists in Tehran (16.4%) believe that Western media opposition with the command of Trump rises from Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States. 40 journalists representing 13.6 percent of the statistical population believe that Western media opposition with the command of Trump results from Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations. Finally, only 36 percent of journalists who make up 12.3 percent of the sample agree that Western media opposition with the command of Trump results from Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies. Based on these data, the most important factor that invoked Western diplomacy for news coverage of public opposition to ban of visa for 7 Muslim countries was its contradiction with American democratic identity and continuing opposition to Trump's presidency that had begun since the election.

Given that parametric methods are used in societies with normal functions, nonparametric methods, and in non-normalized societies, normality of the data is evaluated at first. Then, research hypotheses are investigated. For this purpose, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (KS) is used and if the research data is normal, parametric tests are used and otherwise non-parametric methods will be used to test the research hypotheses.

**Table 4.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to test the normality of research variables (n = 292)

Variable	Status	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
“opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”	Independent	0.750	0.630
Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”	Independent	0.856	0.658
Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”	Independent	0.956	0.502
“Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”	Independent	0.857	0.458
“Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies”	Independent	0.721	0.541
“opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”	Independent	0.698	0.387

According to Table 4 and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the variables of the research are normal. Therefore, the one-sample t-test is used to examine the reasons for Western media’s opposition with the US presidential decree on the visa ban for seven Muslim countries from the perspectives of Tehranian journalists.

**Table 5.** One-sample t-test to examine research variables

Variable	t-statistic	Mean	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
“opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”	5.415	3.57	268	<0.001	0.29
“Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”	5.315	3.52	268	<0.001	0.31
“Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”	4.147	3.42	268	<0.001	0.17
“Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”	4.814	2.84	268	<0.001	0.23
“Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies”	3.147	2.55	268	<0.001	0.19

As shown in Table 5, the calculated t for the research variables is greater than the critical t (1.96) at the 99% significance level, and the significant (2-tailed) level is lower than 5%. Accordingly, “opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”, “Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”, “Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”, “Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”, and “Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies” are reasons for Western media’s opposition with the US presidential decree on the visa ban for seven Muslim countries from the perspectives of Tehranian journalists. The result of Friedman's significant test for prioritizing the research variables is shown in the table below.

Table 6. Ranking of research variables

Row	Variable	Average rank
1	“opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency”	3.86
2	“Trump’s contradiction with American democratic identity”	3.68
3	“Trump’s contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States”	2.95
4	“Trump’s contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations”	2.78
5	“Trump’s contradiction with America’s past policies”	2.000

Table 7. The result of Friedman's significance test

Row	Test type	Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom	Error rate	Asymp. Sig
1	Friedman	87.46	4	0.05	<0.001

Friedman test results, the higher the average ratings, the higher the status of those variables in terms of the possibility of occurrence and impact. In this regard, it can be stated that “opposition to Trump’s policy because of opposition to its presidency” has higher average score (3.86) than other variables in terms of possibility of occurrence and impact. Similarly, other variables are ranked next. According to chi-square test and significant level of  $P_v < 0.05$ , the claim for equality of average of variable ratings is not accepted in terms of desirability.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This research addresses the position of Western media in foreign policy and the explanation of international relations. Given the rise of social networks and the reflection of the views of intellectual leaders in it, public and popular diplomacy is more logical in international disputes and the government's contrasting behavior with democracy, different from national and international identity. Somehow, it rejects the viewpoints of the policy of the government in foreign policy and impact of public opinion on foreign policy is further enhanced. The media helps public diplomacy to play a role in political diplomacy in the field of foreign affairs. With respect to decision of the US government in the ban of visa for seven Muslim countries, western media highlighted popular discourse with flexibility in reflecting events. In this regard, a survey was conducted among 292 Iranian journalists.

Research findings indicate that 28.7% of Tehran's journalists believe that most Western media objected to Trump's decree to cancel the visa for seven Muslim countries because they were opposed to the president from the beginning of elections. In addition, 28.7% believe that the Western media's opposition to this decree because it was contrary to American democratic identity. 16.4% of the

statistical population believes that Western media opposition with the command of Trump rises from Trump's contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States. 40 journalists representing 13.6 percent of the statistical population believe that Western media opposition with the command of Trump results from Trump's contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations. Finally, only 36 percent of journalists who make up 12.3 percent of the sample agree that Western media opposition with the command of Trump results from Trump's contradiction with America's past policies.

In addition, the results of one-sample t-test showed that reasons for Western media outcry with US presidential decree on visa ban for 7 Muslim countries from Tehranian journalists' point of view include the variables of opposition to Trump's policy because of opposition to its presidency, Trump's contradiction with American democratic identity, Trump's contradiction with public opinion and human rights organizations, Trump's contradiction with the past policy of Western media on promoting freedom of expression in the United States, and Trump's contradiction with America's past policies. According to the results of Friedman's test, "opposition to Trump's policy because of opposition to its presidency" has a higher average score (3.86) compared to other indicators in terms of capability and impact. Similarly, other indicators are ranked next.

To explain these findings, one can say that media management plays a greater role in promoting peace through diplomacy in war and conflict situations. They will be accompanied by the media when foreign policy decisions are aligned with peaceful policies. They can also ignore the press; for instance, they can begin not to send any messages to the media, try to develop media management, or adopt a media-oriented policy. By choosing any of these, the government will affect the media by moderating the flow of information. Although government guidance to respond to the media and the creation of specific behaviors is an indication of the impact of media diplomacy on political diplomacy, when governments succeed in controlling diplomatic events and enjoy a high degree of popular legitimacy, the news media supports them and the role of public relations experts is planned to maintain and enhance this support. When a state loses its control over the diplomatic-political process, independent media and critics appear.

This reaction reversed the status of media in the transfer of data from the diplomacy system of previous years to public opinion. This time, it acted from a perspective of media on maintaining the sustainability of national identity against the policies of government officials. Of course, this is more advent in the international relations of developed countries that are based on a democratic model as they have a wider scope based on democratic status and media freedom. In contradiction with the principles of international human rights, if there is a consensus among the elites and the general authorities, impact of the media will be less than the situation in which the elites are fewer consensuses toward government policies. In this case, media diplomacy can play a greater role in applying popular diplomacy. However, political diplomacy may show a passive attitude, under the influence of public diplomacy and media; but foreign policy continues to be based on its political discourse. This issue occurred in the decision of the US government in the ban of visa for 7 Muslim countries. The government continued to insist on its implementation, and the public diplomacy environment helped to cancel this decision in some states. The government responded somewhat against the protest of public diplomacy by applying a little change in its provisions and the removal

of the name of Iraq from the list of countries of Iran, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, and Somalia, and adding a condition for the Syrian refugees. Conversely, it shows that diplomacy still insists on implementing its policies and it resists against media diplomacy as far as possible.

## 8. AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Data used or generated from this study can be requested to the corresponding author.

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