Teaching International Relations in Iran: Challenges and Prospects

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1. Introduction

It is now more than a century that International Relations (IR) has being taught in Iran, mainly as a subfield of Political Science. At least since the last two decades, IR has been accepted as an independent discipline and M.A. and Ph.D. programs in IR have been established in the Iranian universities. However, there is almost no comprehensive research about how IR is taught in Iran. In addition, since in Iran, university professors do not have to teach according to the written and official syllabi ratified by the head of department or faculty, access to the content of courses is difficult and time-consuming[1]. The only way to find out how and what they teach, and what the main texts they use are, is to arrange some interviews with the professors, to talk with their students in Iranian universities, and to survey the main Persian IR texts available. This paper seeks to answer the following questions: 1) What are the main IR theories taught in the Iranian universities?, 2) Which textbooks (Persian and English) are basically being used in

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[1] The B.A., M.A. and PhD programs in Political Science and International Relations including the syllabus of each course used to be approved by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Nowadays, this is the responsibility of each department to ratify its programs in various academic levels. Notwithstanding, each professor is not obliged to have his/her own syllabus for the courses he/she offers each semester.

teaching IR in Iran, and 3) What are the main ways IR is taught by the Iranian professors? By answering these questions, we can find out if other theories than the mainstream IR theories are being taught in the Iranian universities, whether Iranian-Islamic theorizing in IR exists, what the main challenges are that teaching IR in Iran is dealing with, and what the prospects are for teaching IR in Iran in order to contribute to alternative ways of teaching IR worldwide.

First, we define some concepts. In the second section, we briefly survey the existing literature on teaching IR in Iran. In the third section, the research method is addressed. The forth section is allocated to presenting findings and analyzing them. In the final section and conclusion, we deal with the challenges and prospects of teaching IR in Iran.

2. Definition of Concepts

Teaching: Teaching is the activity designed in order to facilitate learning for learner. It functions as interaction between teacher and learner/s. In this paper, in order to operationalize the concept of teaching, we deal with the content of teaching, the suggested readings (textbooks) and teaching methods. Teaching methods are classified into teacher-oriented, student-oriented and subject-oriented methods. We also differentiate between active and passive teaching methods.

International Relations (IR): In this paper, by IR, we mean those courses dealing with theoretical study of foreign relations among nations, states and societies. IR as a discipline is not intended here and the theoretical courses of IR at B.A., M.A. and PhD levels have been chosen for study.

3. Literature Survey

Despite the precedence of more than a century of teaching IR as a subfield of Political Science and almost two decades as an independent discipline at M.A. and Ph.D. levels in Iranian universities, and given the significance of critical examination and qualitative evaluation of the process of teaching and learning IR, there is almost no comprehensive research about how IR is taught in Iran. In this section, we survey some studies that have dealt with examining some aspects of the discipline of IR in Iran in order to highlight the difference, particularly the innovation, of our study with them.

Perhaps the only survey research that has dealt with teaching IR in Iran is the author's research which has culminated in writing three papers. Published in 2006, the first paper "Teaching International Relations in Iranian Universities: Problems and Solutions" focused on the introductory course of the Principles of International Relations (Haji-Yousefi, 2006). The article sought to identify the problems of teaching IR in Iran focusing on the methods of teaching, and provide suggestions for improving existing conditions of teaching it through raising three questions: what the main/supplementary textbooks of Principles of International Relations course are, how the topics are updated and applied, and how much the students are satisfied with the teaching method in the course. The findings of above-mentioned research show that the most significant subjects and topics of the discipline of IR are not taught in Iran, the quality of teaching is not much satisfactory, teaching IR in Iran does not help students to analyze international issues, the students are not much acquainted with textbooks written in foreign languages, and they learn the lessons only within the framework of the course and through the lecturer. Hence the most important challenges of teaching the Principles of IR in Iran include: the students are not fluent in English language and therefore unable to use original English textbooks; the students' analytical ability is

not improved; the textbooks are not updated, diversified and rich; there is no strong and systematic connectivity between theory and case; the courses are not applicable and therefore the students do not enjoy a sense of being useful; there is no connectivity among existing theories of IR and particular conditions of Iran; and the course is not dynamic due to the shortage and limitation of its textbooks.

The second paper was written in English and presented to the annual conference of the Canadian Political Science Association in Carleton University in 2009. The third paper was written in Persian and presented to the Iranian Political Science Association annual conference at Tehran University (Haji-Yousefi, 2009). The main question these two papers are dealing with is: May we propound Iranian International Relations theory? In other words, is there an Iranian IR theory? If no, what are the obstacles to Iranian IR theory-building? In this research, the author seeks to answer the main question using three methods: documentary, interview with several instructors of IR in Iran, and distributing questionnaires among the professors teaching various theoretical and non-theoretical IR courses in Iran. Each of these two papers has dealt with some aspects of this main question. Presenting first-hand information on teaching, research and production of IR knowledge in Iran, these two papers have concluded that there is no Iranian IR theory and the Iranian IR academic community has not much succeeded in domesticating IR theory. The obstacles to producing IR knowledge in Iran are addressed in these two papers too.

Mohammad Sotoodeh in an article titled "Evaluation of the Discipline of International Relations in Iran" tries to provide an image of the situation of teaching and research in IR as well as the potentials of Iranian native and religious culture to produce Iranian IR knowledge. Exploring the impacts of the High Council of the Cultural Revolution on identifying aims, programs and teaching-

research syllabi in the discipline of IR, he examines opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of the educational condition and regulations, students and professors' situation and the conditions of research (Sotoodeh, 2003).

In an interview in 2003, Saeed Taeb examines the state of the discipline of IR in Iran and expresses his points of view on three bases: professors and educational staff, students, and educational environment (Taeb, 2005). In the interview, Taeb regards Iranian educational system, particularly in humanities, as a "high school method" namely without dialogue among professor and students. From his point of view, the following reasons may be mentioned for this situation: students are not fluent in a credible scientific language so they cannot use foreign texts; professors suffer from economic problems so they have not enough time and energy for study and research and usually are unable to participate in international seminars and conferences; there are not any scientific competition among professors to enable them to upgrade their knowledge; the professors do not usually cover new topics and there is no research mission among them so they lack scientific self-confidence; the educational environment is immensely political due to the priority of political orientation in appointing the higher education staff and the lack of independence in policy-making; the lack of possibility for designing new courses which conforms with new international developments; professors do not have creativity and innovation in writing syllabi so the students do not have the possibility to get acquaintance with many topics which in turn leads to decreasing the quality of education in the field. His general conclusion about two spheres of education and research, which is of course without providing any hard evidence, demonstrates that scientific innovation, dynamism and esprit in the discipline of IR in Iran are very low.

In an article published in English, Mahmood Sariolghalam has dealt with the state of IR in Iran and tried to explain the teaching and research limitations of the discipline of IR using documentary sources and his own experiences in teaching and research in IR. Sariolghalam's main hypothesis is that "although IR theories and methodologies have had virtually no impact upon the way in which the Islamic Republic defines the global system and conducts its foreign relations, its influence today among students, the intellectual community, and the interested public is unprecedented" (Sariolghalam, 2009: 158). In his opinion, notwithstanding that the Islamic Republic of Iran officials' attitudes are dominated by normative approaches and revolutionary idealism, Iranian universities have more or less focused on realist and liberal theories. He believes that the destiny of the discipline of IR in Iran is not affected by the nature of government and IR literature underlines the conduit between Iran and international community. From his point of view, the most important challenge of IR in Iran is that theoretical creativity among professors and students is weak because there is no competition in the discipline of IR at student level and creativity and innovation are not encouraged, and Iranian academic system is not organizationally linked with the rest of the world (Sariolghalam, 2009: 169-70).

In a book titled "A Survey of Educational and Research Developments in Political Science and International Relations", Nasrin Mosaffa deals with the macro-level factors affecting teaching and research of Political Science and International Relations in Iran. Despite raising various questions, the book mainly seeks to find out the causes that affect the quality of teaching and research of Political Science and International Relations in Iran (Mosaffa, 2007: 6-7). The book is mainly based on documentary sources but the author has used the opinions of several Political Science and International Relations professors through holding

two expertise roundtables. At the end of the book, some solutions have been provided for upgrading the quality of the discipline of Political Science and International Relations.

As this short survey of the literature demonstrates, in spite of the significance of teaching IR in Iran, limited research that have been conducted in this regard are mainly based on documentary not on survey research. Most of sources are mainly based on personal experience of authors. Except for the author's papers published or presented to domestic and international conferences, no other researcher has used survey for acquiring original data. Also any of mentioned sources has not addressed content, sources and method of teaching IR in Iran as a case study. Aiming at reinforcing the literature and bridging the research gap, this paper seeks to find out that those who teach IR courses in Iran, on what topics they focus, what sources they use, and how and why they teach.

4. Research Method

This research is a descriptive-analytic one and applies integrated research methodology because it uses quantitative and qualitative methods. The study population of this research is all professors who teach IR in Iranian universities. Unfortunately there is no precise statistics about the number of these professors. Meanwhile it is difficult to differentiate between the professors who teach Political Science from those who teach IR. Most of Political Science faculties have a department including professors who teach Political Science and IR. Of course there are several faculties, like the Faculty of Law and Political Science of Tehran University that have two distinct departments of Political Science and IR. According to the statistics provided by the Institute for Research and Planning of Higher Education, 328 professors are teaching and researching Political Science

and International Relations in state-run universities of which 58 teach IR. Iranian Political Science Association has 200 members of which 69 people are university faculty members. But unfortunately it is practically impossible to differentiate between Political Science and International Relations professors. The Iranian International Relations Association has also 200 members of which 40 people are university faculty members. We prepared a list of IR professors including 60 people and sent questionnaires to all of them. Up to 20th March 2010, 28 questionnaires were received from the professors.

The chunk or lumpy sampling method was used in order to select professors in order to acquire their syllabus or interview with them. According to this method, a part of research community is selected by researcher which is more available. We conducted interviews with ten professors including 4 professors from Shahid Beheshti University, 2 professors from Tehran University, 2 professors from Imam Sadegh University, 2 professors from Allameh Tabatabie University, 1 professor from each of Esfahan, Tarbiat Moddares and Razi Kermanshah universities. On the same basis, we got information about 19 IR professors' syllabi through questioning professors and their students.

Using collected data, a list of main (compulsory) and supplementary readings (textbooks) recommended by professors in their IR courses were compiled. At the next stage, we did a content analysis of the Persian-written textbooks which were assigned in the IR courses as compulsory or supplementary readings. By the content analysis of these texts, we sought to find out which theories/paradigms are addressed in the textbooks. Our main goal was to identify: how the author looks and selects subjects; what the author's significant concepts are; whether an Iranian IR theory exists; which theories/paradigms are addressed and so on. In addition, by comparing what the Iranian professors do not incline to

teach and what they have mentioned in their textbooks, we will understand better the conditions of teaching IR theoretical courses in Iran.

5. Findings and Analysis

In this section, the results about teaching IR in Iranian universities including state-run and private ones are dealt with. We have used documentary sources, interviews and questionnaires. Given the aims of the research, several components were considered. As the process of teaching includes the content, sources (textbooks) and method of teaching; in data collecting section the questions of what topics, how and what sources are taught are answered. The in/compatibility of recommended readings with the data resulted from content analysis of syllabi, the in/compatibility of professors' area of research with the courses they teach, and how the syllabi are updated, are also considered. Under the title of textbooks, the following subjects are considered: the amount of original Persian textbooks as main and supplementary readings, the issues and theories covered by these textbooks, and the amount of recommended English textbooks both as translated to Persian and in original language. Under the title of teaching method, the teacher-oriented, student-oriented and subject-oriented methods on the one hand, and active and passive methods, on the other, are examined.

1-5 Contents and Topics of Teaching IR

When talking about content and topics of teaching, the focus is on topics and theories that the instructor presents in class. The content of teaching can be accessed using the syllabi and the main textbooks introduced by the instructor. Professor's area of research and his/her view about IR theories have also been examined. Finally, we point out if the professors update the content of their courses and how.

1-1-5 Theories

One of our main questions in this paper is to find out which IR theories and to what extent, is taught in the Iranian universities. In this section, we deal with the type of theories/paradigms taught in Iranian universities. Tables 1 and 2, and figure 1 demonstrate the type and percentage of each theory being taught.

Table 1: percentage of teaching different paradigms

Paradigms	1-5%	6-10%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Realism	6.3%	-	62.5%	25%	6.3%
Liberalism	33.3%	-	60%	-	6.7%
Marxism	46.2%	46.2%	7.7%	-	-
Constructivism	20%	-	60%	13.3%	6.7%

Figure 1: Comparison of percentage of teaching different paradigms
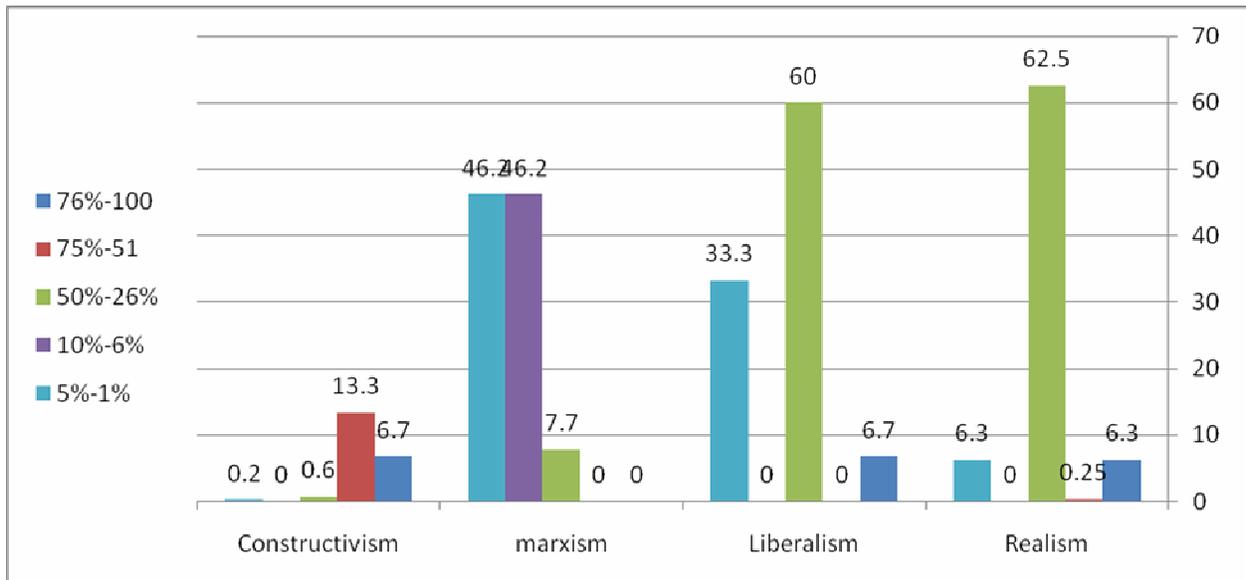
Table 2: Theories which are not being taught

Theory/Paradigm	Percentage
Marxism	81/8%
Constructivism	18/2%

According to Table 1 which is provided on the basis of answers to the question "Approximately what percentage of your IR class do you devote to teaching each of theories and paradigms in IR field?" 62.5% of respondents devote 26 to 50 percent of their class to teaching realism, 60 percent of respondents devote 26 to 50 percent of their class time to teaching liberalism and constructivism, and 7.7 percent of respondents devote 26 to 50 percent of their class time to teaching Marxism. Figure 1 demonstrates the information comparatively. After this issue, we examined the issue that "What theories are not taught by Iranian IR professors?" According to the findings, all respondents teach realism and liberalism but 81.8% and 18.2 percent of them do not teach Marxism and Constructivism, respectively. The results are shown in Table 2.

## 2-1-5 Professors' Areas of Research

In this section, we seek to find out what the Iranian IR professors' motivations are for research, how much in/compatibility there are between their research area and teaching, and what issues and regions they are interested in their research. It seems that we can explore the dominant atmosphere on IR academic community in Iran through aggregating information about what theories are taught by Iranian IR professors, on the one hand, and their research areas and motivations for research, on the other.

According to our findings through the questionnaires and interviews, the IR professors' main motivations for selecting research titles and topics are as shown in Table 3 and Figure 2. We explored the professors' motivations in order to understand the relationship between teaching and research. The areas of research were also chosen for study because they demonstrate the amount of in/compatibility between Iranian professors' areas of research and the courses they teach.

Table 3: Iranian professors' most important motivations for selecting areas of research

Motivation	Percentage
1. Personal interest	20%
2. Study for teaching (teaching causes research)	8%
3. Class discussions and students' questions (Students create motivations)	0%
4. Faculty and university-motivated researches	4%
5. Non-academic State-run research centers' needs	8%
6. Non-academic private research centers' needs	4%
7. Items 1, 2, 3 and 5	12%
8. Items 1 and 2	12%
9. Items 1 and 3	8%
10. Items 3 and 7	4%
11. Items 1, 2 and 5	12%
12. Items 1 and 5	8%

Figure 2: The most important motivations for choosing area of research

Iranian professors' most important motivations for selecting areas of research
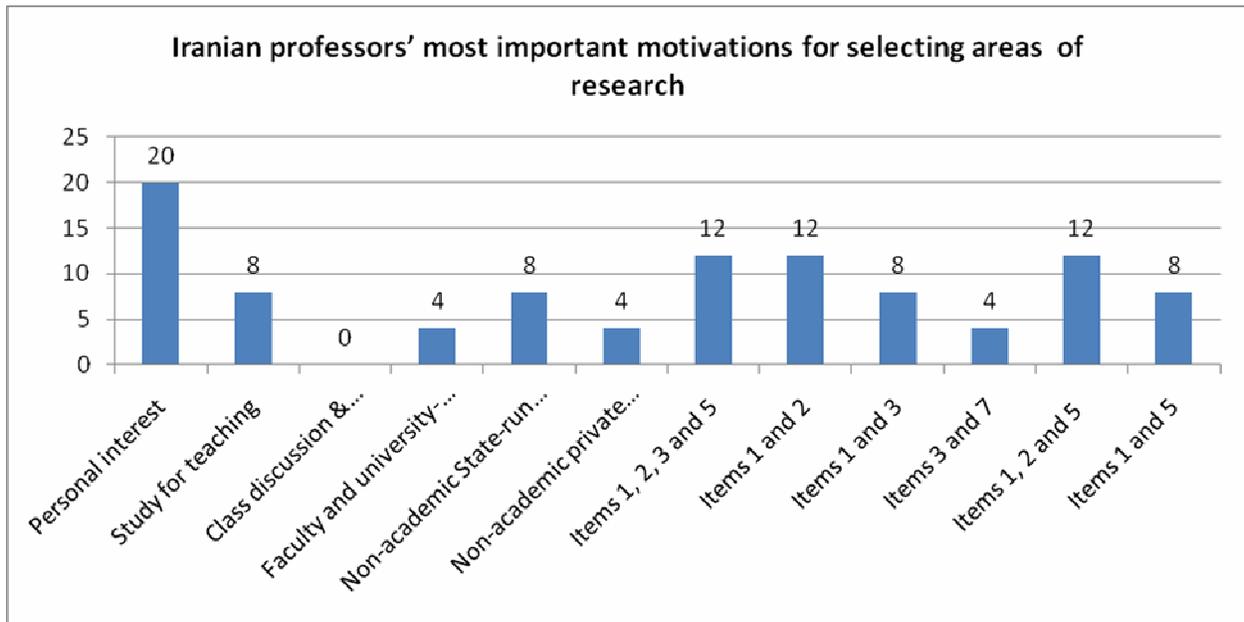
As it is obvious, personal interest in research acts as the most important motivation for Iranian IR professors. The next motivations are study for teaching and non-academic state-run research centers' needs. Given that 12 percent of respondents have mentioned a combination of personal interest, study for teaching, class discussions/ student questions, and (state-run and private) research centers' needs as the motivations of research; we can realize the significance of these factors.

Table 4 and Figure 3 show the amount of in/compatibility between Iranian IR professors' areas of research and courses they teach. 60 percent of professors have said that there is 50 to 75 percent of compatibility between their areas of research and the courses they teach. 32 percent believe that there is 75 to 100 percent of compatibility between their areas of research and the courses they teach.

Table 4: Percentage of overlap between professors' areas of research and the courses they teach

	Percent
75-100 percent	32%
50-75 percent	60%
25-50 percent	8%
Less than 25 percent	-

Figure 3: Comparison of compatibility between professors' areas of research and the courses they teach
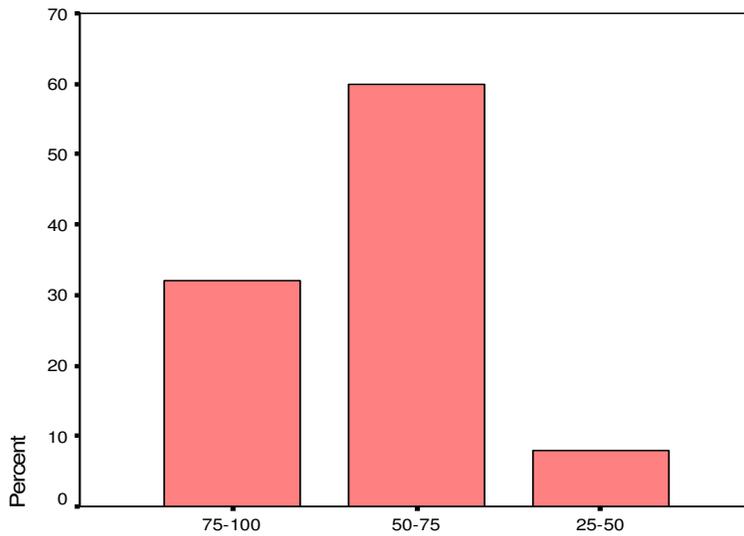
Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate the Iranian IR professors' teaching concerns in terms of subject and geography. 56.3 percent of respondents claim that in 25 to 50 percent of their IR teaching, they use examples related to Iran. The issues related to the U.S.A (88.9%), Iran (83.3%), the Middle East (77.8%), Europe (55.6%), and Central Asia and Caucasus (50%) cover the most mentioned cases in teaching IR.

Table 5: Percentage of using Iran-related examples

	Percentage
75-100 percent	18.8%
50-75 percent	12.5%
25-50 percent	56.3%
Less than 25 percent	12.5%

Table 6: Percentage of examples related to different countries and regions

	Yes	No
1. Iran	83.3%	16.7%
2. US	88.9%	11.1%
3. Europe	55.6%	44.4%
4. Middle East	77.8%	22.2%
5. East Asia	27.8%	72.2%
6. South Western Asia	33.3%	66.7%
7. Africa	22.2%	77.8%
8. Latin America	11.1%	88.9%
9. Central Asia& Caucasus	50%	50%

In sum, it may be said that the main features of the IR academic community in Iran are 1) Iranian professors pay more attention to realist and liberal theories in their teaching, research and analysis, 2) Iranian professors mainly deal with research according to their personal interest and regulate teaching on the same basis, 3) there is an overlap between the courses they teach and their research areas and issues, and 4) in their teaching and research, they pay more attention to the issues related to Iran, the U.S., the Middle East, Europe and Central Asia and Caucasus.

5-2 Textbooks Recommended in Teaching IR (Persian and English)

In this section, the list of recommended main/ supplementary and original Persian/translated to Persian and original English textbooks used in teaching IR in Iranian universities has been compiled from the data collected from interviews, surveys and examinations of syllabi.

Table 7 is prepared on the basis of data collected from our questionnaires and syllabi. All textbooks used in teaching IR in Iran have been classified on the basis of the axes "original Persian/translated/original English" and "main/supplementary".

Table 7: IR textbooks used in teaching IR on the basis of original Persian/ translated/ original English/ main/ supplementary

Original Persian/ Main	Original Persian/ Supplementary	Translated/ Main	Translated/ Supplementary	Original English/ Main	Original English/ Supplementary
Ghavam (2005)	Ghavam (2005)	Pfaltzgraff (2005)	Pfaltzgraff (2005)	Baylis & Smith (2007)	Jervis (1976)

Ghavam (2009)	Ghavam (2009)	Holsti (1994)	Holsti (1994)	Jackson & Sorenson (2007)	Keohane (1984)
Moshirzadeh (2007)	Moshirzadeh (2007)	Linklater (2006)	Linklater (2006)	Carlsnaes et al (2002)	Deutsch (1988)
Seifzadeh (2003)	Seifzadeh (2003)	Wendt (2005)	Wendt (2005)	Waltz (1979)	-
Seifzadeh (2005)	Seifzadeh (1993)	Jackson & Sorenson (2004)	Star & Russest (2002)		-
Seifzadeh (2004)	Askarkhani (2004)	Baylis & Smith (2007)	Devetak & Der Derian (2001)		_
Ghasemi (2005a)	Haji-Yousefi (2003)		Kompenhod& Keivi(2007)		
Bozorgi (2003)	Haji-Yousefi (2005)	Morgenthau (2005)	Wallerstein (2007)		-
Naghibzadeh (1994)	Ameri (2005)		Chalmers (2009)		-
Simbar (2008)	Ghasemi (2005b)		Little (2006)		-
Ameri (2002)	Alizadeh et al (2004)				-
-	Kazemi (2003)				-
-	Ghasemi (2007)				-

Figure 4 illustrates the Iranian IR professors` preference for main/ supplementary and original Persian/ translated/ original English texts in their theoretical and non-theoretical courses of IR.

Figure 4: Number of using various textbooks by Iranian IR professors
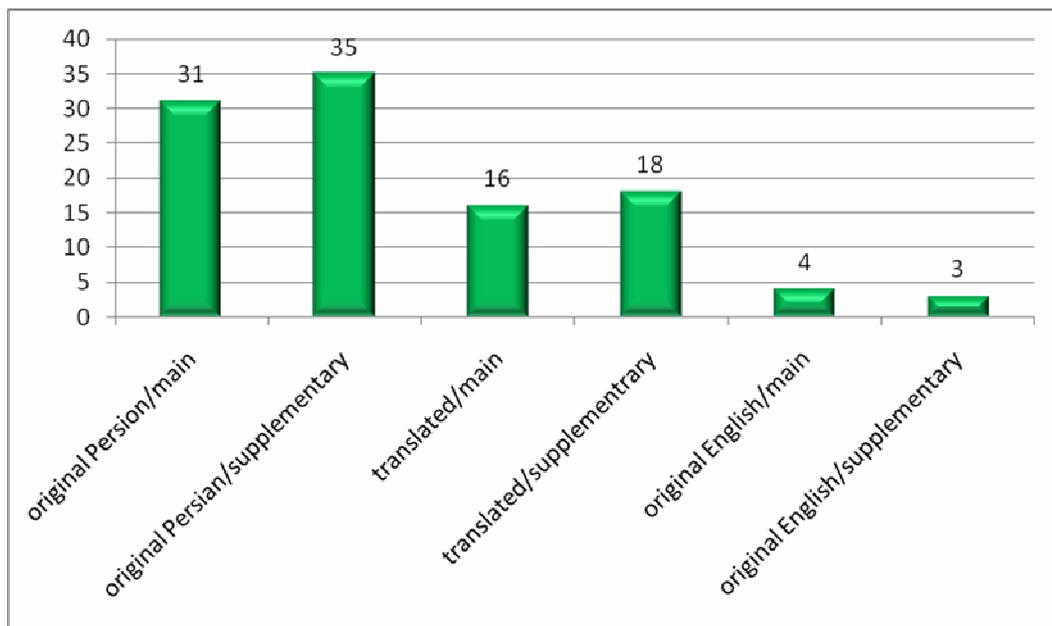
According to the findings of this paper, there are 19 original Persian textbooks in IR field which are recommended as course readings. These books have been recommended 31 times as main (compulsory) reading and 35 times as supplementary reading for different courses of IR. There are 10 translated books (from English) in IR field listed in Table 7. These books have been introduced 16 times as main reading and 18 times as supplementary reading. Only 7 original English books have been recommended from among which 3 have been recommended as supplementary and 4 as compulsory readings. Chart 1 illustrates the fact.

Chart 1: Percentage comparison of recommended original Persian/ translated/ original English and main/ supplementary textbooks
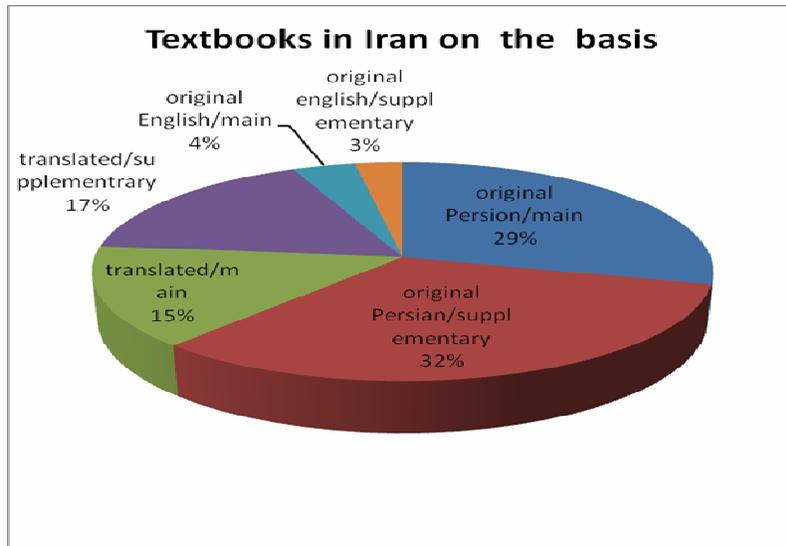
5-2-1 Original Persian/ main textbooks

According to the information collected from questionnaires, interviews and examination of syllabi, Iranian IR professors have used the textbooks listed in Figure 5 as the main compulsory readings for IR theoretical courses.

Figure 5: The original Persian/ main textbooks: title/ number of being recommended
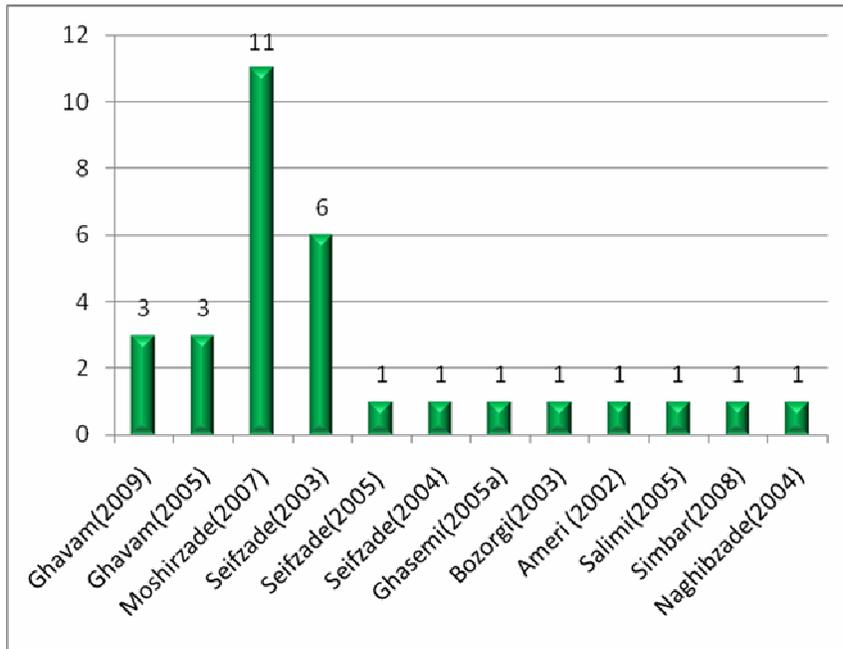
As the figure demonstrates, the most popular textbooks among the original Persian books which have been recommended as the main compulsory reading include those of Homeira Moshirzadeh (2007), Hossein Seifzadeh (2003), and Abdolali Ghavam (2009, 2005). Among 31 times of reference to these books, 11 times were made to Moshirzadeh, 6 times to Seifzadeh and 3 times to each of Ghavam's books which constitutes 36%, 20% and 10%, respectively.

In her book titled "Change *in International Relations Theories*", Moshirzadeh addresses world system theory, postmodernism, feminism, critical theory, English School and meta-theory, in addition to four main paradigms. In his book titled "*Principles of International Relations*", Seifzadeh (2003) points to theories and issues like integration theory and conflict, theory-building in the South, state and international system, foreign policy analysis, national interests, security, power, decision-making approach, diplomacy and level of analysis, meta-theory issues and examination of main debates in IR, in addition to two main

paradigms of realism and liberalism. He has also addressed the Islamic issues in IR in order to domesticate IR knowledge and proposed the concept "human mutual interests" in his attempts at theory-building (Seifzadeh, 2003). In his book titled "Principles of Foreign Policy and International Politics", Ghavam (2009) has dealt with theories of integration and conflict, feminism, peace studies, state and international system, foreign policy analysis, national interests, approach of power, decision-making approach, diplomacy, and levels of analysis, in addition to two main paradigms of realism and liberalism. In another book titled "International Relations: theories and approaches" published in 2005, Ghavam has pointed out four paradigms of liberalism, realism, Marxism, and constructivism besides issues and theories like world system, international political economy, integration and conflict, postmodernism, environmental theories, feminism, peace studies, theory-building in the South, critical theory, state and international system, foreign policy analysis, national interests, security, decision-making approach, diplomacy, levels of analysis, and meta-theory issues. The difference between Ghavam's books is that the second one covers also green theories, critical theory, and the issue of security and omits the issue of power as a separate chapter.

5-2-2 Original Persian/ Supplementary Textbooks

Based on the information collected from questionnaires, interviews and examination of syllabi, the number of using original Persian textbooks as supplementary readings for IR theoretical courses by Iranian professors have been mentioned in Figure 6.

Figure 6: original Persian/ supplementary textbooks: title/ number of being recommended
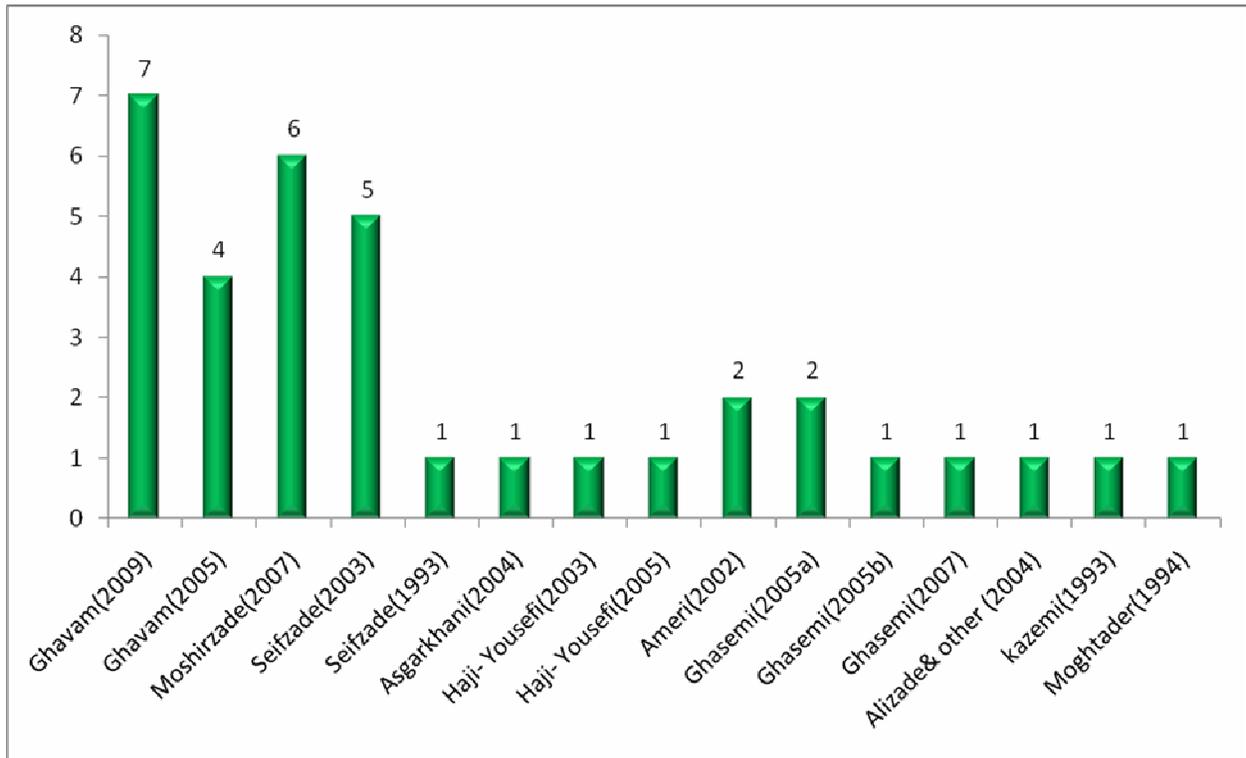
As Figure 6 illustrates, the most references have been made to Ghavam (2009), Moshirzadeh (2007), and Seifzadeh (2003). Table 8 shows the number of references to these four textbooks as main and supplementary readings.

Table 8: The original Persian textbooks recommended as main/ supplementary readings

Book	number/ main	number/ supplementary
Moshirzadeh (2007)	11	6
Seifzadeh (2003)	6	5
Ghavam (2009)	3`	8
Ghavam (2005)	3	4

## 5-2-3 Content Analysis of Original Persian Main/ Supplementary Textbooks

In this section, we briefly study the content of the original Persian textbooks recommended as main/supplementary readings to answer the following questions: (1) which paradigms of IR are covered in these textbooks? (Figures 7 and 8), and (2) Which IR theories, and how many times, are mentioned in these textbooks (Figure 9)?

Figure 7: Number of original Persian textbooks covering each IR paradigm
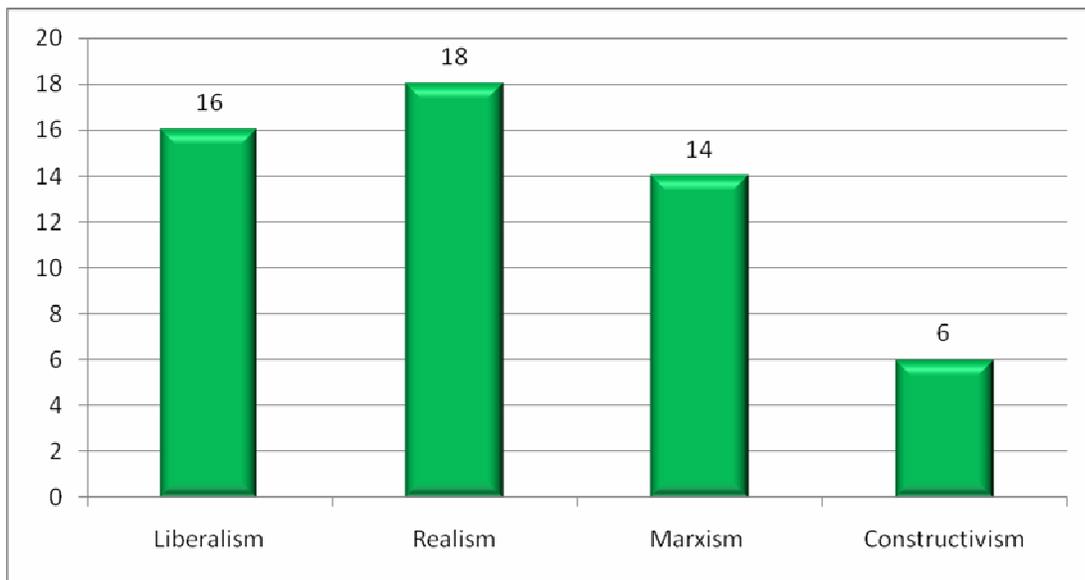
The findings show that the 21 recommended books as main/supplementary textbooks for students address different theories as follows: 18 books (33%) address realism, 16 books (30%) address liberalism, 14 books (26%) address Marxism and structuralism, and 6 books (11%) address constructivism.

Figure 8: Number of IR paradigms covered in each book
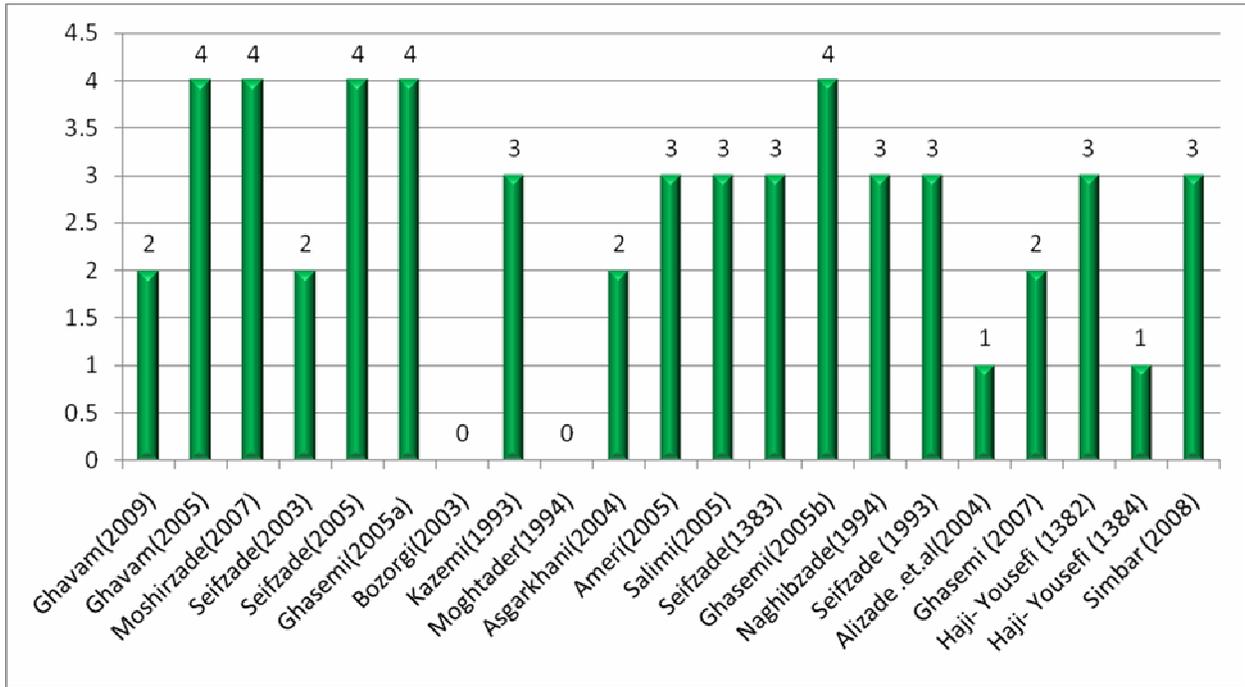
Accordingly, Moshirzadeh (2007), Ghavam (2005), Seifzadeh (2005), Ghasemi (2005) and Ghasemi (2007) have examined all four main paradigms of IR (realism, liberalism, Marxism and constructivism).

Figure 9 illustrates the number of time various theories in IR are covered by original Persian textbooks.

Figure 9: Coverage of theories and topics in original Persian textbooks
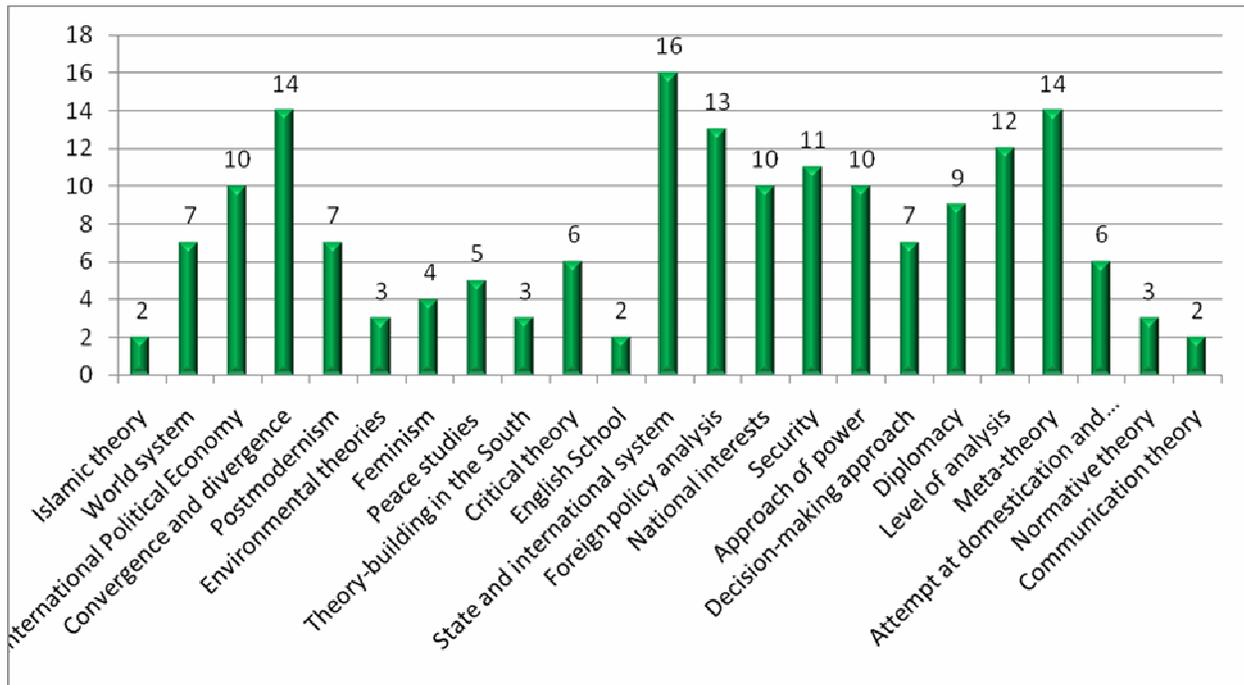
The content analysis of the original Persian textbooks –mainly compiled by IR professors in Iran- demonstrates that Ghasemi's book titled "Principles of International Relations" which deals with 17 topics of theoretical categories of IR and 4 paradigms of liberalism, realism, Marxism/structuralism, and constructivism, is the most comprehensive book in terms of its theoretical coverage, but it has been recommended 1 time as the main reading and 2 times as the supplementary reading.

The content analysis of the original Persian textbooks in terms of covering various theories and topics of IR, demonstrates that while the topic of "state and international system" has been covered in 16 out of 21 textbooks which enjoy the most frequency that is 9% of all books, the topic of "communication and information new order" and "Islamic theory" has been covered only in 2 out of 21 textbooks which have the least frequency that is 1% of all books. The frequency of covering each topic is shown in the Table 9.

Table 9: Examination of theories and topics (percentage of all books)

| Theory/ topic	The number of examination (percentage of all books)
Communication theory	1%
Islamic theory	1%
World system	4%
International Political Economy	6%
Integration and conflict	8%
Postmodernism	4%
Environmental theories	2%
Feminism	2%
Peace studies	3%
Theory-building in the South	2%
Critical theory	35
English School	1%
State and international system	9%
Foreign policy analysis	7%
National interests	6%
Security	6%
Approach of power	6%
Decision-making approach	4%
Diplomacy	5%
Level of analysis	7%
Meta-theory	8%
Attempt at domestication and theory-building	8%
Normative theory	2%

It is interesting that the original Persian textbooks have generally sought to describe as well as explain theories not to read them critically. Further only 3 out of 21 textbooks have attempted at domesticating and theory-building. Iranian-Islamic theory has been explored only in two books written by Seifzadeh (2003) and Naghibzadeh (2004). In these two books, the authors have tried to domesticate theory-building in IR in Iran. In the final chapter of his book titled "Principles of

International Relations", Seifzadeh has attempted at domesticating and theory-building by proposing the concept of "mutual human interests". Discussing the capacity of Islamic theory-building in IR, Naghibzadeh has also examined the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic as well as its international perspective in the final chapter of his book.

5-2-4 Translated/Main Textbooks

The textbooks translated from English into Persian and taught as main compulsory reading has been addressed in Figure 10. The chart illustrates the number of recommending each textbook as the main reading by Iranian IR professors.

Figure 10: Number of recommending translated books as main reading
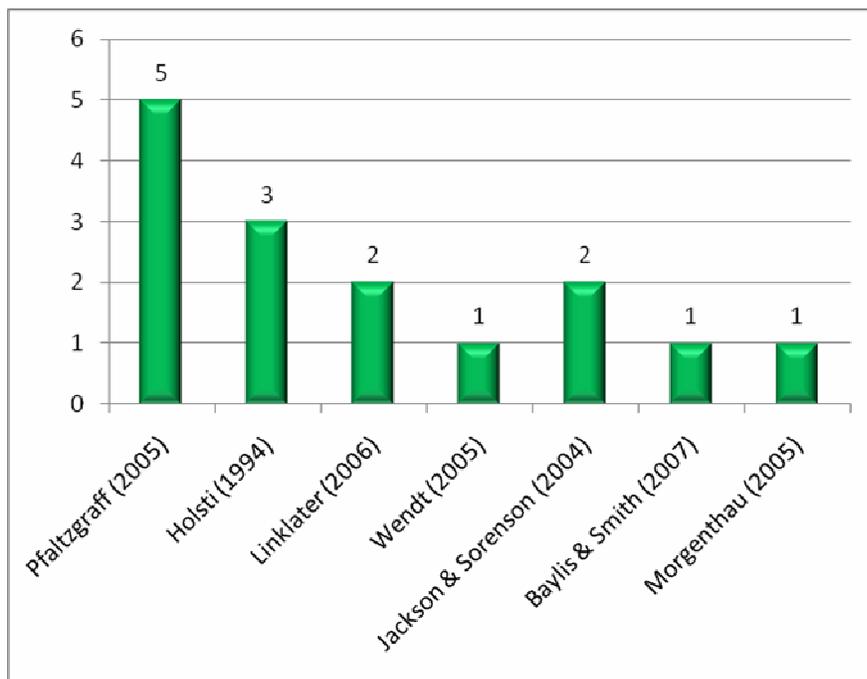
5-2-5 Translated/ supplementary books

Figure 11 demonstrates the number of recommending each translated textbook by Iranian IR professors as the supplementary reading.

**Figure 11: Number of recommending translated books as supplementary reading**
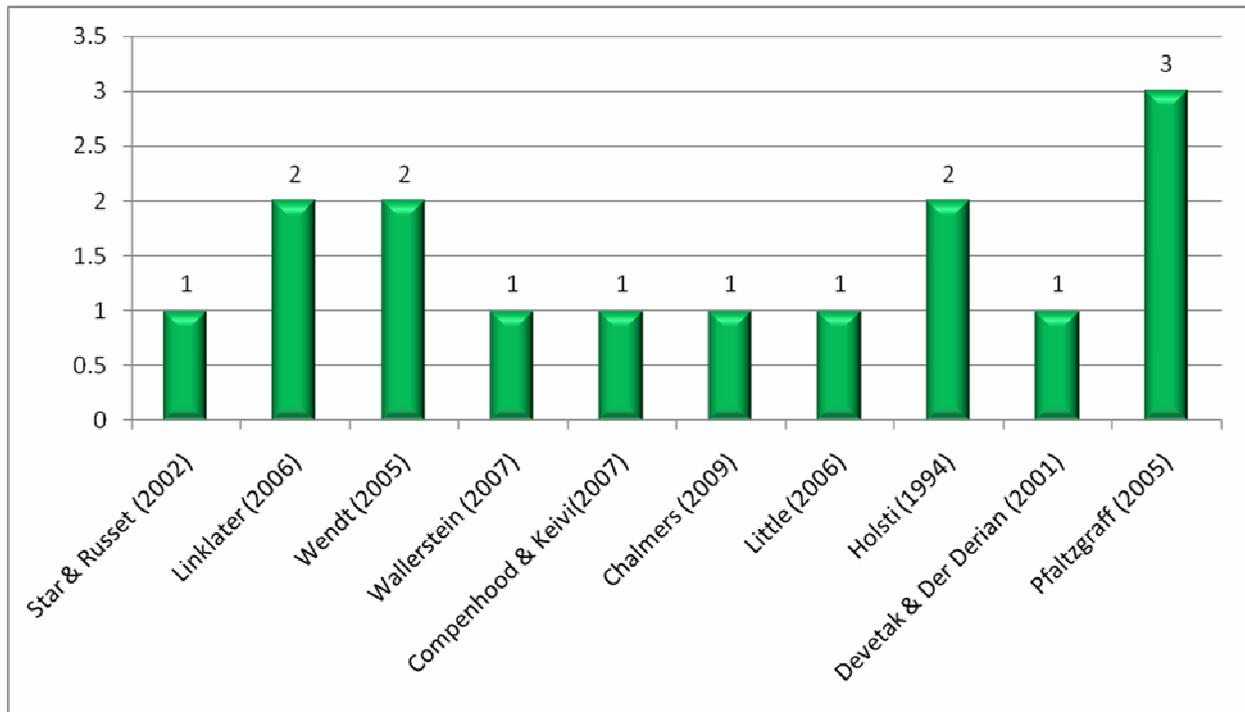
Accordingly 18 professors namely 17% have recommended translated textbooks as supplementary reading from among which Pfaltzgraff's book titled "*Contending Theories of International Relations*", is the most popular one.

5-2 Original English/ Main Textbooks

The findings of this research confirm the findings of our previous paper "Teaching IR in Iranian Universities: troubles and solutions". While the findings of the mentioned paper show that Iranian students are not fluent in English so they cannot use original English textbooks (Haji-Yousefi, 2006), our findings here too show that only four original English books have been recommended as main

textbooks by Iranian IR professors which constitute only 3% of all recommended books (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Number of original English/ main textbooks recommended by Iranian IR professors
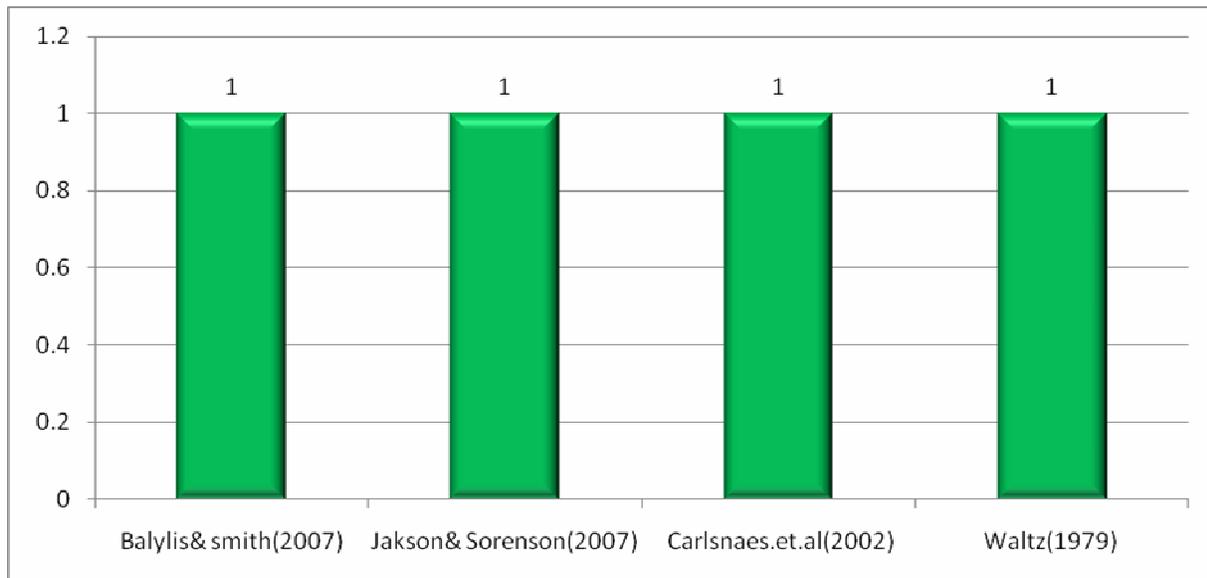
5-2-7 Original English/Supplementary Textbooks

As most students and some professors cannot use original English textbooks of IR, using these texts are not compulsory. According to the data collected for this paper, only 3 professors out of 40 ones have recommended original English textbooks as supplementary reading. Figure 13 shows these books and the number of time they are being recommended as supplementary reading.

**Figure 13: Number of original English/supplementary textbooks recommended by Iranian IR professors**
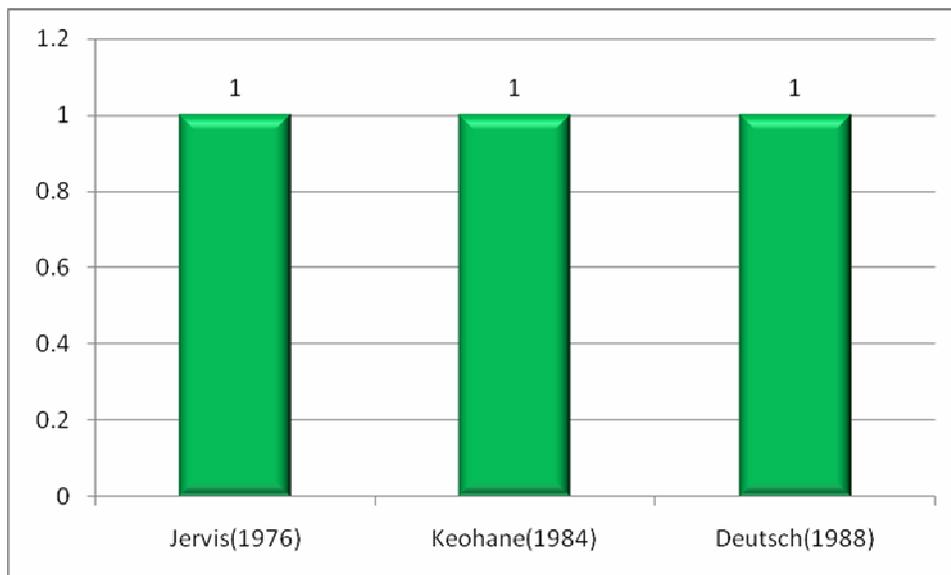
5-3 Teaching Methods

In this section, we seek to explore Iranian professors' teaching methods, their epistemological position, their teaching goals and the extent their course syllabus is up-to-date.

5-3-1 Teaching Method

As mentioned before, teaching method is classified into two types: teacher-oriented, student-oriented and subject-oriented on the one hand, and active and passive, on the other. Figures 14 and 15 illustrate our findings in this regard.

Figure 14: Teaching method
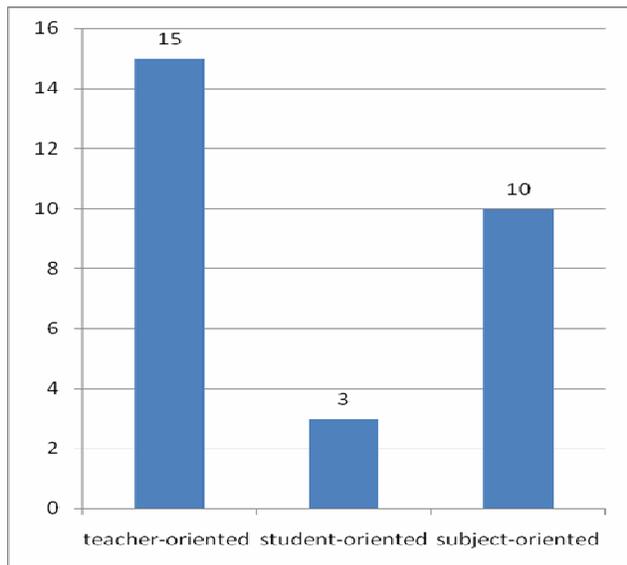
The findings of our research show that among 26 examined syllabi, 10 professors (36%) teach by subject-oriented method, 15 (53%) teach by teacher-oriented method, and 3 (11%) teach by student-oriented method. Therefore, the dominant teaching method among Iranian IR professors is teacher-oriented method. The findings of our research also show that only 7% of 26 professors use passive method as their teaching method and 93% of respondents teach on the basis of active method.

Figure 15: Teaching method
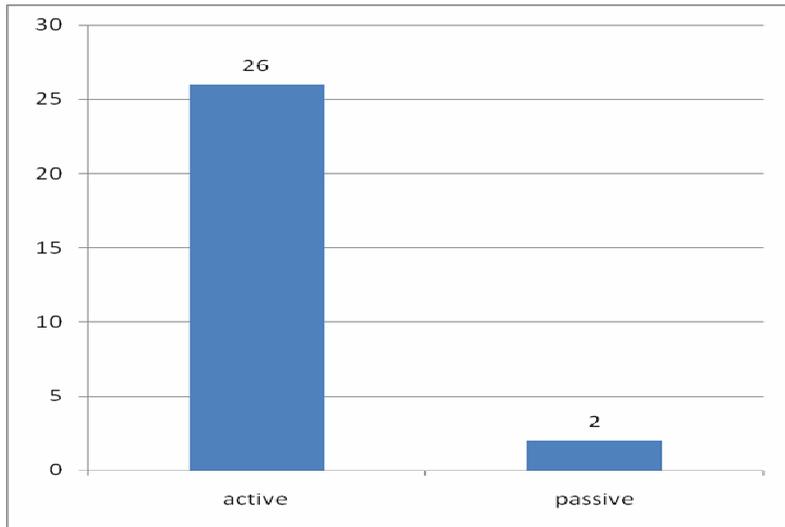
5-3-2 Epistemological position of Iranian IR professors

It seems to us that when we are discussing about teaching IR in Iran, the professors` epistemological stances may help us to understand fully how IR is taught in Iran. Figure 16 18 illustrates our findings regarding the epistemological stance of Iranian IR professors.

Figure 16: Epistemological Stance of Iranian IR professors (number)
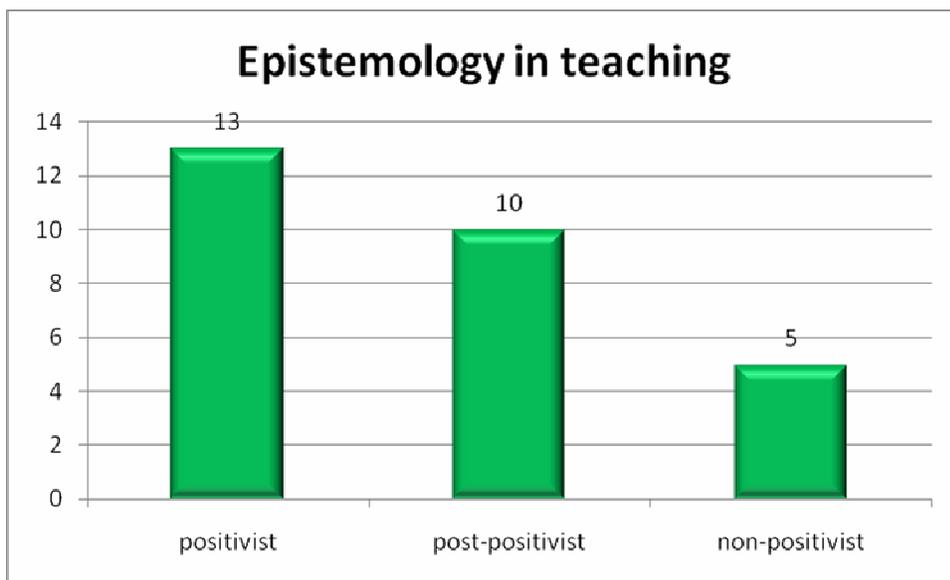
On this basis, from among 37 professors who filled the questionnaire, 10 (36%) mentioned post-positivism, 5 (18%) mentioned non-positivism, and 13 (46%) mentioned positivism as their epistemological position in studying and teaching IR.

5-3-3 Goals of Teaching

In this section, the most significant goals of teaching IR from professors' point of view are examined on the basis of collected data (table 10 and chart 22).

Table 10: Most significant goals of teaching IR in Iran

Goal	Percent
a) Socialization and education of students so that they will be employed as an expert in government	12.5%
b) Growth and expansion of IR as a discipline	8.4%
c) To prepare students to acquire skills in order to advise the government of the d) Islamic Republic of Iran to achieve national interests	16.7%
e) Items a, b and c	29.2%
f) Get the ability to understand and equip with tools that transcend the frontiers of existing knowledge	4.2%
g) Ability to foresee events and solve the problems	4.2%
h) Increase students' foresight and scientific potency	4.2%
i) Acquire ability to design foreign policy for Islamic Republic of Iran	4.2%
j) Recognize, understand, analyze and provide solution in this realm	4.2%
k) Items c and e	4.2%
l) Items a and c	4.2%

Figure 17: Most significant goals of teaching IR in Iran
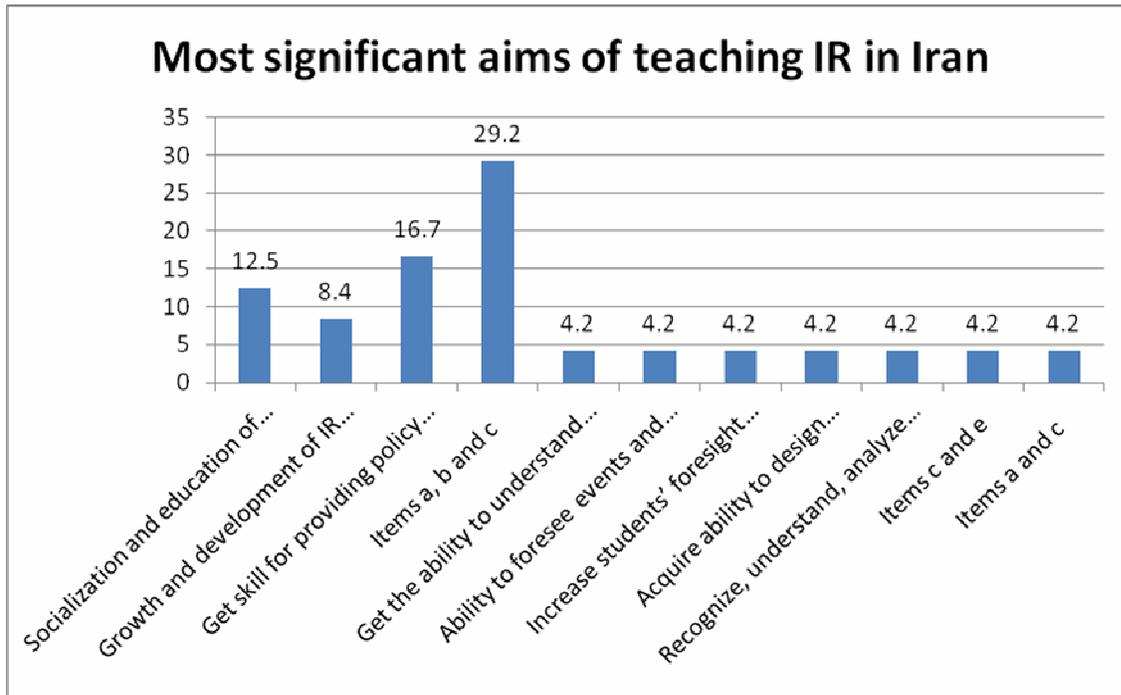
5-3-4 Adjustment of syllabi to new international events

Based on our findings, Table 11 illustrates how and to what extent Iranian IR professors adjust their course syllabi to new developments in international relations.

Table 11: Adjustment of syllabi to new international events

	Percent
a) I adjust the content of my course from day to day depending on events in the world	20%
b) I adjust my course several times per term depending on international events and issues	20%
c) I only make adjustments within the term in rare circumstances and only in response to major events like 9/11, the collapse of Berlin Wall or Iraq War	20%

d) I only make adjustments from one semester to the next on the basis of events	10%	
e) I do not change my course based on international events because the core concepts and categories of IR are almost constant	20%	
f) Items a and b	5%	
g) Items c and d	5%	

According to Table 11, it is clear that 20% of respondents adjust their syllabi from day to day to international events, 20% adjust several times per semester, 20% rarely adjust their syllabi to international events, 20% never adjust their syllabi and 10% adjust once a semester. In sum, 40% of professors do not incline towards adjustment of their syllabi while 50% adjust them in different intervals. In this way, given the dominance of teacher-oriented method in teaching IR theoretical courses, as mentioned before, it can be said that Iranian IR professors fairly do well in adjusting their course syllabi to new developments in international events, though the textbooks they recommend for reading are not being updated accordingly.

6. Conclusion: challenges and prospects of teaching IR in Iran

In this paper, we dealt with the methods, subjects and textbooks of IR being used in teaching IR theoretical courses in Iranian universities. Given the lack of written information and documentary sources in this regard, we did a survey research and tried to acquire information from different Iranian IR professors who teach at state-run and private universities. Accordingly we can mention the most significant challenges as well as prospects of teaching IR in Iran on the basis of collected information.

Teaching IR in Iran is mainly on the basis of Western sources and theories which are transferred into Iranian educational system through translation by Iranian IR professors. The content analysis of the main sources taught by them indicates that there is not any specific system for transferring the concepts and theories of Western IR into Iran. The original Persian textbooks written in the 1980s are mostly being reprinted without any change and used in teaching IR. For instance, the book "Principles of Foreign Policy and International Politics" (Ghavam, 2009) which is the third main textbook and the first supplementary one in teaching IR was first published in 1991 and then was reprinted 15 times without any substantial change[2]. Also the book "Principles of International Relations" (Seifzadeh, 2003) which is the second main textbook and the forth supplementary one in teaching IR in Iran has been reprinted without any change. Content comparison of these two books indicates that there is not any specific and coherent method for transferring the concepts and theories of Western IR into Iran. The content study of these books as well as Moshirzadeh`s one (2005) shows that three different methods have been used for transferring the concepts and theories of Western IR to Iranian students. The main problem of these textbooks is that they are more or less a collection and translation of Western texts without any critical reflection so there is not any sign of Iranian view and domestic Iranian-Islamic theories in them.

Given the collected information, we can conclude that the dominant perspective and paradigm in teaching IR in Iran is that the Western theories produced in the discipline are pure science and should be transferred to Iranian students without any change. The domination of this perspective has prevented any

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[2] In the 7th version of this book reprinted in 2001, only one new chapter was added to the book.

attempt at adjusting Western theories and domesticating them. Of course, we should not neglect the fact that Seifzadeh inclines towards Iranian-Islamic theory-building in his later works (2003).

It is also worth mentioning that Iranian students are not able to use original English textbooks. So the fact is that the only conduit for transferring the main theories of IR is through these original Persian textbooks. The result is that not only creativity and innovation in learning and teaching IR in Iran are not nurtured but the quality of teaching in the field is declining. In other words, according to the information acquired about the content, method and sources of teaching IR in Iran, although the professors adjust their syllabi to new developments in international relations, they do not have required motivation for updating their textbooks accordingly. The students' inability to use original English textbooks has also reinforced the lack of dynamism in teaching and learning IR in Iran.

In addition, the lack of paying attention to key issues like the history of evolution of IR discipline and focusing only on a unified dominant narrative, on the one hand, and belief in science and therefore in being universal of IR theories, on the other, has also vanished the motivation for domestic Iranian outlook. This research demonstrates that three decades of teaching IR in Iran since the Islamic Revolution do not enjoy dynamism and no serious change can be observed. The changes, if any, are solely quantitative i.e. the number of students and professors has increased but no qualitative change is observable.

But from my point of view, in spite of static history of teaching IR in Iran, there is a bright future in prospect. It seems that in recent years, due to some changes in the Iranian higher education policies, particularly focusing on reinforcing humanities and arranging various conferences held by Iranian Political

Science Association and Iranian International Relations Association, a kind of self-consciousness is emerging in Iranian IR academic community which is based on the necessity for examining the existing condition of teaching in these fields and providing solutions for the current static situation. Form the author's point of view, the following recommendations may be proposed in order to reinforce this self-consciousness and make teaching IR in Iran more dynamic: 1) to pay attention to different narratives about the history of evolution of IR discipline in the West, 2) to deepen the issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology in IR by Iranian professors, 3) to teach all theories of IR including mainstream, dissident and critical theories, 4) to use new methods for teaching IR including student-oriented, subject-oriented and problem-solving methods, 5) to revise existing textbooks, compile new textbooks and establish a system for compiling updated textbooks, 6) to upgrade students` ability to use original English textbooks of IR, and 7) to use programs like internship, co-op, and simulation in order to make IR teaching in Iran more applied.

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