



## Sociology of Social Documentary Photography in Forming Social Movements and its Effect on Iran Islamic Revolution

Mahgan Farhang Khaghanpour<sup>1</sup>, Saeedeh Rahman Setayesh<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Photography is taken as one of the modern disciplines of the art world. Social documentary photography, with its realistic, impartial and truthful nature, is aimed at keeping a record of social events. It is a document of an event happened in front of the camera which may symbolize history and identity of a society. As a science, sociology has emerged concurrently. Sociology of art is aimed at introducing the art or style of a given era which has been created by a given society. Reflection and formation are two significant approaches of sociology of art. It is aimed to highlight the effect of sociology of photography in forming social movements especially Iran Islamic revolution.

**Keywords:** Formation, Photography, Reflection, Social Documentary, Sociology.

This is an open access article under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

### 1. Introduction

In comparison with history of art as an object-oriented and distinctive field, sociology is of problem- and decision-oriented nature. The study of cultural-artistic movement or of an era of art world from the sociological point of view is typically a re-review of stable works of art which have been created as a result of an event, movement, revolution or ideology considered as a historical identity. As for documentary photography and social realistic photography, it is mentioned that they both share the same challenges such as taking photographs of social events through which specific attitudes and a wide range of events could be highlighted. The underlying content and subject are tried to be bold by documentary photographers. Documentary photography has different lenses to portray events through but social documentary or social realism are typically different. Social documentary photography deals with recording events with no changes or deletions made in addition to the fact that censorship is not allowed. It tries to show the reality of the event as it is. Accordingly, it can be named social realism. Reflection is the most significant aspect of social documentary photography. As its name indicates, social documentary photography is in a line with sociology of art. Photographs of Iran Islamic revolution (1357)

<sup>1</sup> Teacher in professional collage of Shiraz, faculty of educational group, education and learning office, Fars, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Teacher at Applied and Scientific University, News Collage of Shiraz, Fars, Iran. E-mail: saeedeh.setayesh@gmail.com

are the documents of what were going on those days. They are realistic. Based on different photographs taken by different cameras from various perspectives, everything is the same as a recording of events of what happened during that time. These photographs can be considered as a reflection of the revolution. Photographs of Iran Islamic Revolution can be said to be the sociology of that epoch.

## 2. What is the purpose of sociology of art?

Sociology of art is aimed at analyzing the work of art to make explicit and implicit meaning of a given epoch. Then, it tries to make a relationship between the meaning and the contemporary society of art structure. As for the mentioned approach, meaning-making of the work of art may lead to identification of social content (macro, middle, micro). ([Ravderad, Azam, 1386:67](#)). Photographs of Iran Islamic revolution and those of social activities of its founder “Imam Khomeini” prove the inclusion of a cultural movement. Although pictorial formation of the mentioned cultural movement strongly depends on attempts made by Kaveh Golestan and Mohamad Farnood, a sizable number of photographers including Abbas Ataar and Maryam Zandi play an important role in expanding the movement after its reflection. Photographs of [Iran Islamic revolution \(1357\)](#) can be classified as a combination of divergent social classes with unavoidable differences and similarities familiar to agents of those events. Majority of sociologists think of Iran Islamic revolution as a modern revolution inside a traditional society. At very beginning, the revolution claimed to fulfill the society following fundamental evolution of political, behavioral and ethical aspects. ([Zandi, Maryam, 1393:3](#)).

As mentioned, the current study is aimed at identifying the relationship between available photographs and contemporary society and at studying the revolution according to reflection and formation.

As for reflection, the effect of society on art is focused upon. It is stated that art (work of art) is a realistic reflection of events happened in a society. But, formation deals with the effect of art on society. It is based on the theory that works of art pave the route of social evolutions. ([Azam, Ravderd, 1386:68](#)). Initial photographs of Iran Islamic revolution are in harmony with social theories. As the first one to take photographs of Iran Islamic revolution, Kaveh Golestan has a collection of photographs reflecting the exact route of that movement. Pictorial reports have shown that Kaveh Golestan and other photographers followed a special technique to make their own artistic style. On the other hand, they are in a position to state that art is superior to society and artists (here photographs) internalize new values and ideologies into society. The effect of works of art on society cannot be neglected. These pieces of art may lead to ethical, social and values evolution. ([Azam, Ravderad, 1386:69](#)).



Figure 1: Maryam Zandi, revolution documentary, 1357



Figure 2: Kaveh Golestan, Iran Islamic Revolution, 1357



Figure 3: Maryam Zandi, Iran Islamic Revolution, 1357



Figure 4: Abbas Ataar, Iran Islamic Revolution, 1357

Having watched the photographs of **Iran Islamic Revolution (1357)**, who belong to that era and who get informed through photographs and political and historical books find these photographs and painting a realistic reflection of the events of the epoch. Photographs are laden with information related to that revolution.

Victoria Alexander believes that reflection of sociology of art includes a wide range of research indicating that art is a mirror of society or art is conditioned by society. (Alexander, 2003, p21)

### 3. What is formation?

Formation is the coordinated movement and the effect of those taken photographs on society. Photographs were publicly presented as wall posters or through newspapers to play a highlighted role in revolutionary movement. The photographs of the first martyrs, demonstrations and protests are said to be the symbol of social realism of that epoch. They are considered social documentary photography which has turned into war photography after revolution. It plays a double role during 8-year imposed war.

Photographs of revolutionary movements and wars are the most valid documents of the events. The fact is that reading voluminous historical books is not possible for everyone and picture is more powerful than word. (Omrani, Maryam, 1389:47)

### 4. Conclusion

Sociology of art attempts not to link the meaning of art to the work of art. Rather it tries to make a link between the work of art and its audience and society because the effect of society gives a meaning to the work of art.



Figure 5: Kaveh Golestan, Figure 6: Kaveh Golestan, Iran Islamic Revolution, Kordestan of Iran, Iran-Iraq 1357 war

Photograph can be of social dimensions since the photographs of social, cultural and political history of a society can be the reflection of the dominant condition of that given era. It is said that there is a direct relationship between sociology and photography.

Howard Becker believes that photography and sociology have emerged concurrently. Sociologists and photographers are responsible for defamiliarization. Social photographers and documentary photographs keep a recording of what is seen inside the society. Sometimes, it is expressed critically and painfully. In sociology of photograph's point of view, reflect is of high significance. It can be reworded that reflect is the most important aspect of social documentary photograph.

It is mentioned that:

- Work of art is the reflection of historical, social and educational systems as for media, photograph is a media also, it is mentioned that information and cultural condition of a give epoch are presented by media to help the gradual formation of that event or social behaviors.
- Feedback of sociology results greatly affects the art in addition to the effect of social structures and sociology research. On the other hand, sociology of art affects the artists and audience.
- One of the most notable objects of sociology of art is to provide a well-formed picture of the relationship between art and society. To this end, interactions, time-based changes, proceedings and formation are studied.

## References

- Alexander, Victoria, Sociology of art, Blackwell publishing, 2003,7  
Doviniu, Jean, Sociology of art, translated by Mehdi Shabi, Markaz publication, 1379  
Iran contemporary photography (child), contemporary museum of art, Shahrvār of 1360  
Jfarian, Habibeh, with camera, Herfe-e honarmand publication, second print, 1393  
Omarani, Maryam, Have you seen all my photos?, Herfe-e honarmand publishing, No. 34, autumn of 1389  
Ravderad, Azam, Sociology of art, Farhangestan-e honar research magazine, No. 2-, Fravardin and Ordibehesht of 1386  
Zandi, Maryam, Revolution of 57, Nazar publishing and printing research-cultural institute, 1393